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THE HOMILIST.

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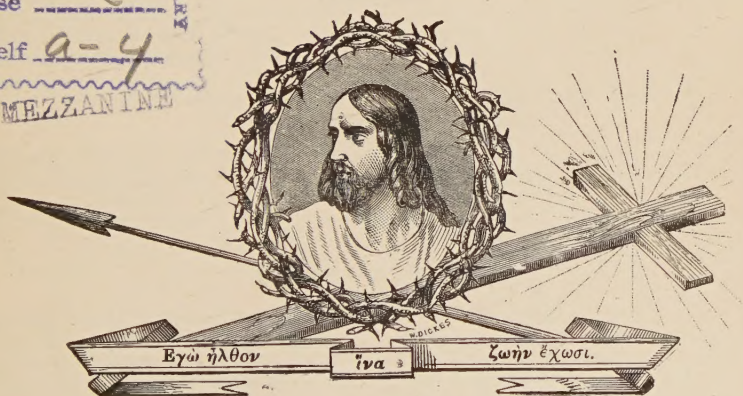
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REDLAND PARK, BRISTOL.

VOL. IV., ECLECTIC SERIES.

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1884.

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The
Leading Homily.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD,
AND
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

“OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.”—*Matthew vi. 9.*

IN my last sermon before the University, I spoke of the reasons which are at present deterring some men from taking orders, and I endeavoured to show that some of these reasons were founded on misconceptions. To-day I intend to endeavour to interpret to you the great religious impulse which is so full of hope, and is so profoundly affecting this generation, both in Cambridge and throughout the country, and which is making men feel that those reasons are irrelevant, or inadequate, or, if not these, that they must be removed. The stream is too full to flow in its old channel.

I say, endeavour to interpret, because the real meaning and origin of such a religious impulse is not always recognised at the time. We can look back at the period of Wesley, or the Reformation, and from this distance we can discriminate the ideas that were coming into distinctness at these or similar periods. But in the ages themselves this was difficult. It was a confused struggle in which even the chief actors scarcely understood the significance of their own actions.

It may, however, surprise some persons to hear it said, that there is a religious impulse so profoundly affecting us. They would appeal to prevailing unbeliefs, and deny the existence of any such religious movement at all. No, I would say confidently: faith has but changed its form; the unbeliefs are mainly irrelevant or superficial. There is a deep, almost voiceless current of faith below, far deeper than the unbelief, which shows itself by many signs. It would take too long to speak of the signs of this religious impulse in the country at large, but I may very briefly remind you of the indications of it, in the changes that have lately come over Cambridge. During the last 15 years, the Church, we are told, has lost her hold on the Universities; and we hear men deploring in the country, that the colleges are godless—as if the new statutes of a college could drive out God. And yet it is certain that here and now, there is more religious life, and more active church work, and far truer and keener religious interests than when I was an undergraduate 25 years ago. What, then, is the nature of the religious impulse that is at work? “They are very good young men now-a-days,” said an old lady to me, “but I am sure I don’t know why. They don’t seem to me to believe anything.” That is the problem I want to consider. It is certain that the old motives are, to a large extent dissipated or powerless. They survive in books, but not in living hearts; not in the hearts of the young and sensitive, who are the index of the future.

It is not fear of punishment. It may be doubted indeed whether that ever kept men from sin, or impelled them to good. It is not, in our class at any rate, the hope of saving our individual souls. For some reason we cannot make this motive touch us. It may be a magnet, but we are not magnetised. We listen, we read about it, we don’t deny it, nay, we cherish the hope, but we don’t move to it. There is no “atrophy of our religious sense.” Our sense is vivid enough, but irresponsive to this motive. It is no philosophy of utility, no consideration of the greatest good of the greatest number. This is sometimes a useful criterion of conduct, but is never a force. “Why am I to seek the greatest happiness of the greatest number?” That is a

question that this philosophy leaves unanswered, and a motive it leaves unsupplied. It is not a vivid and defined faith, as taught by the authority of the Church, that moves men now. We listen to the eloquent claims of priests, Roman or Anglican, as they dogmatize on the undefinable, and overawe us with mysteries and solemnities; and then we go out into the fresh air and sunlight, and throw it all aside, and go on under a deeper guidance. It is not the authority of doctrines founded on biblical texts. They are demonstrated irrefutably; we listen to a system and its formulas and phrases. But they have somehow lost touch with many of us; we tolerate them, as we still tolerate the Athanasian creed, read in some churches this morning, but they do not affect us. They pass by us; they have no fruit in action. We know instinctively that they are survivals, that the truth is larger than the dogma; and we turn to the ever fresh and simple words of Christ with a sense of unspeakable relief. In them there is life and power. Yet though it is not any of such old religious motives which impel us, there is a force somewhere; a force which carries us all on,—the great non-religious and semi-religious world, as well as the so-called religious world,—in spite of all retarding and destructive agencies. Differing and rival sects, Church Unions, and Church Associations, and all that they imply, are unable to ruin the cause of true religion. The tide carries them with it in its mighty rush, like bubbles and froth on the surface. We do our work in some form or other, because we must, under some heavenly attraction. A conviction deeper than words is within our souls. Can we attempt to give it form or name? Can we for an instant see the “buried life” of this generation—the conviction below its beliefs?

The hidden force which impels us is the conviction, the feeling, the instinct, the consciousness, the Revelation, call it what we will, of *the Fatherhood of God, and of the brotherhood of man—a brotherhood bound up in some unspeakable relation to Christ.* In a certain sense we are familiar enough with these words; but they are true in a sense far deeper than our familiarity extends; deeper than any thoughts or words will reach. This Fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of man, this unity of Nature in relation

to a Spiritual Being, underlies our poetry, our science, our social aspirations, our politics, our philosophy, our religious movements; it is surely the fundamental motive of the day, operating even where it is quite unsuspected.

To illustrate my meaning with any degree of completeness would require many sermons; but, happily, many illustrations are not needed in addressing this audience. You will fill up my scanty paragraphs. First as to poetry. It is God's Fatherhood of the world and of ourselves, it is our kinship to nature which is the source of our indescribable love for it. There is no deeper depth in us than our love of flowers, and sunny slopes, and sea, and sky, and our fellow creatures. Look at a child with flowers, or with its pet animals. How it loves them! I say its love is a consequence as it is an unconscious acknowledgment of kinship. We love nature because we are of it, and from it, and in it. And the poet feels this kinship with a finer sense than others, and can express it for us. We may think we love nature, and learn from nature. It is that we are loving God, and learning from Him and from His works. This is the thought, the revelation, often unexpressed, that lies below Wordsworth's interpreting love of nature. Every one will recall the lines which express this most precisely:—

“I have felt
 A Presence that disturbs me with the joy
 Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
 Of something far more deeply interfused,
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
 And the round ocean, and the living air,
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
 A motion and a spirit that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows, and the woods,
 And mountains ——”

The Presence to Wordsworth was not always, as here, indefinite, unnamed, he knew that “of God—of God they are;” it was the

Eternal Father of all that inspired him, as it inspired Milton, with this pure love—

“These are Thy works, Parent of Good!
Almighty. Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair.”

We can at present, perhaps, but faintly and unconsciously enter into this rich companionship, but we all share it: our eyes and our senses may be too dimmed and too blurred to perceive the Presence; but that is the secret of our love of Nature. It is an acknowledgement of the universal Fatherhood of God; an acknowledgement deeper than words, not the less divine in origin, even where unsuspected or unexpressed.

Precisely the same truth is taught us by the very different processes of science,—science, which is sometimes regarded as the antagonist of poetry. For science, especially in its modern and most fascinating developments, is full of the grand thought of relationship and continuity; it is revealing a foundation in fact, for the prophetic fancies of the poet. The unity of Nature is now not only a magnificent poetical conception, it is almost a demonstrated theorem as well.

And if we turn to our social aspirations and our politics, we find that they, too, are penetrated with this idea of the brotherhood of man, which is so closely akin to the Fatherhood of God. The great democratic movements everywhere; the passion for liberty; the socialistic organizations; the numerous societies and associations; the schemes of practical philanthropy; the marvellous brotherly kindness of the poor to one another; the thrill of response that true brotherliness evokes; the verdict, spoken or felt, that is passed on all unbrotherliness, and especially on the unbrotherliness of parties and sects of Christians; the sickening horror that we feel as we read of the failure of civilization in our great cities; the passionate impulse to be up and doing,—all directly and plainly arise from this instinct of brotherhood. The University is responsive to this impulse in many forms. It is at present an instinct rather than a creed. But our hearts are responsive to it, as the drops in the ocean are responsive to the far off unseen attraction. Some day it may become a creed.

But, you may say, supposing this analysis were true: supposing that this idea of the unity of nature and brotherhood of man really is the common thread that runs through our poetry, our science, our social aspirations; supposing that it is the idea of the century; is it as a religious impulse that we ought to regard it? What has it to do with Christianity?

What is Christianity, I reply, without it? Surely it is no less fundamental a thought in Christianity than it is in poetry or science. When Christ taught us to pray to "Our Father in Heaven," He gave us the very climax of His revelation of God. The two great commandments in which He summed up the law may be restated thus: "Realize the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man."

This thought may seem to you to have little in common with religion, as it ordinarily presents itself. True; but I must beg you, therefore, to distinguish for a moment between religion and revelation. They are not one thing, they are two; more often opposed than co-operating. The opposition may be seen in every age, in every country; pre-eminently it may be seen in the Bible. The Old Testament is the history, not of a religion, but of the struggle between religious instincts and the higher light, which we must call revelation, that constantly opposed those instincts. The religious instincts, the devotion to cultus and dogma, were strong in the Jews, and took the form of idolatry at one time, of temple worship and ritual at another; but they were always leading them wrong, into superstition, hardness, sacerdotalism and low views of God. The revelation through the prophets was always contending with these lower religious instincts, always dwelling on the elementary virtues, on justice, brotherhood, and love. The Fatherhood of God was being slowly revealed by God to the prophet, and through the prophet to the people. This was the essence of the Old Testament revelation. But the Old Testament closes in gloom with the silence of revelation and the triumph of the lower religious instincts. We see "no prophet any more," and we soon see Pharisees.

When Christ came, He came as one of the prophets; He came to continue, to complete this suspended revelation. He revealed

His Father to man. He brought us straight into God's presence. He called us children of God. He did not found a new religion. It would be truer to say, He shewed the mistake, the obscurantism of religion. In other words, He shewed that the relations of man to God were not expressible by cultus and dogma, but they were expressible by the filial relation to God, and by the brotherly relation to man. He shewed us the type of a perfect brother. Revelation was, therefore, once more in conflict with religion; Christ was in conflict with the Pharisees and Scribes. The religious instincts were mighty, all but universal; they had found their uncompromising foe in the person of Christ, and a few humble followers, and the eternal contest reached its climax in the cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

But the voice of revelation was not silenced; Christ's words are still and for ever true; though for so long, for so many centuries, these great revealed truths, the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, have been overlaid by religion, that is, by cultus and dogma, which do but obscure the truths which they ought to illuminate. These truths have been half hidden by superstition and a terrible theology, but they have lain treasured in the silence of human breasts, and now at length men are beginning to realize them. "We know that we are the sons of God," is our unspoken creed. It is a revealed truth that now shines by its own light; would that it could enter into every individual heart and shine there.

I have used the phrase "revelation" of the truth, because that seems to me the truest way of describing the process by which it has become the property of the human race. For the human race is the manifestation of God's puposes. At any rate, we know of no other manifestation; and, therefore, the great truths that men have mastered are, in whatever way they have come to man, a part and a stage of God's education of the race. But it is equally true to speak of these truths as discovered by man. Some thinkers prefer this expression. "As far as I am concerned," says Darwin, "I think there has been no revelation." But this is not so blank a contradiction of the revelation-theory as it seems. For discovery and revelation are not antagonistic terms. They

are two aspects of the same process. God reveals by man's discoveries; man discovers through God's revelation. There is a point of view from which evolution and revelation are identical. The processes of science are most characteristically described as discovery; the intuitions of the prophet and the poet are more fitly described as revelation. Whether, then, we describe this growing instinct of the Unity of Nature, the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, as God's revelation now more clearly seen, or as the result of human discoveries, a part of a great moral evolution, is not of the first importance. It is the fact, not the theory about the fact, that is essential.

If a few more words may be permitted, I should like to revert to the phrase used above—a "brotherhood bound up in some unspeakable relation to Christ." What is the relation of Christ to this feeling of brotherhood? It will not be expected that this relation which St. Paul strove hard to realize and to illustrate by various metaphors can be defined in a few phrases. Further, it is a relation which is spiritual, not material, and does not need our realization of it in order to become real. It will assume many forms in different minds, and all the forms may be but aspects of the same truth. It is not possible, even if it were desirable, to dogmatize on the nature of this relationship. But if we endeavour to answer the question, "What place has Christ in this feeling of 'brotherhood'?" and if we look to His own teaching, and not to any system, subsequently constructed, for the answer, we shall probably arrive at some such thoughts as these. Christ is the fulfilment of God's purposes in man; He did the will of His Father perfectly. He realized in perfection the sense of God's Fatherhood; His love, obedience, union, and identity with the Father were perfect. He shewed to mankind the perfection of brotherhood; free from all national and sectarian and class and personal prejudices; free alike from selfish aims, and all ostentation of unselfishness: He realized—what we can but dream of—the perfect Brother. He did, therefore, reveal in His own person, as no man could have done, the central truth of religion, the Fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; these are seen in Christ.

But we should feel that this is inadequate. There is a closer relationship if we can but express it. Perhaps we may approach it thus. Our individualism is not absolute: we are not units, we are linked by myriad ties of heredity to the generations that precede. These links constitute the family, the nation, the race; and in some way there are spiritual links that bind all our souls together in one life, a life which proceeds ultimately from Christ the Son of God, who is the Head and Fount of all life. The origin of our spiritual unity is the fact that our spirits are derivatives from one origin, and that origin the Christ "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But in such thoughts we soon lose ourselves: and such thoughts are not necessary to the life of true religion and the life in Christ.

I have spoken of brotherliness to man, and sonship to God, as the source of the great religious impulse that we are all more or less feeling. Now the advantage, in practice, of clearly understanding the nature of the great impulse at work amongst us is this. It gives confidence. It enables us to estimate the conflicting tendencies at work. It shews us how the main stream is setting, and enables us to avoid the backwaters and stagnant pools. You ask yourself instinctively how this or that bears on these great principles. And you will find this test useful in solving many a perplexity: it will prevent your wasting years on experiments that must prove barren.

Take, for example, questions of Church parties, or of taking orders. The real question is, How can I best express and stimulate in others the feeling of brotherhood in Christ? If vestments and rituals and sacerdotal claims—unknown to Christ and His followers—if these and similar survivals from a darker age best represent the brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God, and rouse pure brotherly conduct in those who witness them, let us have them, in God's name. If brass bands, and street processions, and Hallelujah hymns develop the feeling of brotherhood better, I am for the brass bands and the streets. If good schools, and charity organizations, and "White Cross Armies," and workmen's clubs, and cheap concerts, and recreation grounds, and Artizans' Dwellings Acts are the better way, let us strive to get them by

all means. For if you have one strong guiding principle, like that of realizing brotherhood, you will welcome any work which tends in this direction; and not shut yourself up in a sour religionism, or not less sour anti-religionism. An enthusiasm for a great cause makes you cheerfully tolerate, and even sympathize and co-operate with minor enthusiasms if they tend aright. It gives room for wide diversities of good life, such as do exist, and it effaces the false distinction of the religious and the secular.

But the true brotherly mind will find a more excellent way than is found in any of these alone.

"The sense of kinship adds an indescribable wholesomeness and brightness to our religion. It often takes us years to shake off the belief that somehow grasps us in youth, that religion consists in a certain attitude of mind, into which we must force ourselves by some external influence: that certain postures of body or of mind are worship. We have yet to learn that the *θρησκεία καθαρά* is charity, and unworldliness, and purity, that the only ritual which is of the essence of Christianity, is the attitude and posture of a brother among his brothers, in the presence of the eternal Father of all nature and all mankind. It gives a practical, though unattainable ideal of life. It strikes at impurity (*ἀδελφὴν τίς μοιχέυσει*); at unselfishness; at frivolity; at the weary melancholy of life. It overcomes evil with good. It harmonizes our scale of virtues. Generosity, brotherliness, ought to be high in the scale: we know they ought, and they are so. It makes a gentleman and a Christian more nearly synonymous terms than they have sometimes been, because it affects our conception both of the ideal gentleman and the ideal Christian. Both of them are the ideal brother.

And here I must conclude. These final years of the century are full of hope and promise. For this truth is laying its grasp on the young, and ennobles all on whom it lays its grasp, and you may live to see it shining forth in strength and purity.

But beware of the foes of this truth. Everything that keeps us from saying "Our Father" in all its fulness and simplicity and universality; all views of wealth, whether of money, or

power, or intellect, other than as a trust held for the brotherhood; all selfishness; all exaggeration of religion in the direction of either cultus or dogma; all these are foes.

And there is one mistake which you may make: a generous mistake, but one which may, nevertheless, mar your usefulness for many a year. It is the mistake of thinking that brotherliness will do without Christ. Let me tell you a true story that I heard yesterday. It contains the whole matter. Some of the best and ablest of the students at a Women's College opened a class for teaching the poorest of the men in a neglected suburb. They were fired by the noblest impulse, to give themselves to work for their unfortunate brothers. They read to them, they taught them reading and writing, they sang to them, and the men gathered to them in increasing numbers. After some months they asked the men whether there was anything in particular that they wanted to hear more about. There was silence; and then a low inaudible voice was heard from among them. One of the men went up to the speaker: "What was it you wished specially to hear about?" she asked. "Could you tell us," he replied, "something about the Lord Jesus Christ?" This story needs no comment.

Such, O young men of Cambridge, is the deep-seated and universal power which is discernible on all sides, as the motive power of goodness springing from God Himself; the hope of humanity, the goal of moral evolution, and central truth of revelation: it is the sonship to God and brotherhood of man, unveiled and made intelligible to men, "at sundry times and in divers manners," and chiefly in the person of Jesus Christ. Now we can but grope for words, and our tongues stammer with the greatness of the thought. But you are young, and "to be young is very heaven;" for you may live to see this thought find a voice—you may yourselves give this thought a voice. Who should give it a voice if not you in your wealth and strength and happiness? And you may see the world re-echo it as the truth it has waited for and looked for so long. Till then pray we with ever fuller meaning to Our Father in Heaven.

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Germs of Thought.

Human Sympathy Superseded by Divine.

(*A New Year's Meditation.*)

“AND YET I AM NOT ALONE, BECAUSE THE FATHER IS WITH ME.”
—*John xvi. 32. (R.V.)*

OUR Lord's valedictory discourse is in three portions. The *first* contains reasons for His departure, and the promise of the Comforter. The *second*, the abiding union between Himself and His disciples. And the *third*, the renewed promise of the Comforter, and of His own return. Our text occurs at the close of the third part. He has rebuked the despondency of His disciples, alluded to in the words:—"Sorrow hath filled your heart;" He has told them that the coming of the Holy Spirit is dependent on the return of the Redeemer to Heaven—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you:" that by His coming the world will be convinced, the disciples fully instructed, especially in the knowledge of their Lord—"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now:" that then He will Himself speedily come again, to end their sorrows, to complete and perpetuate their joy; giving them perfect knowledge, and intimate access to the Father. Then, at the close, our Lord appeals to their faith in His heavenly origin—"I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." As if He had said:—"You believe the former of these truths, namely, that I came hither from heaven. Is not the latter equally credible? Shall I not return thither?" At the same time He checks their confidence in the sufficiency of their present faith to meet all emergencies. "Jesus answered them, Do ye not believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his

own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

Here, then, the theme suggested is that our Lord, although deprived of all the usual supports of friendship and sympathy, and deserted by all visible companions, is yet spiritually upheld, and is even brought into closer communion with His Father:—"And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me." Three thoughts are suggested by these words: First, *Human sympathy is helpful, and not to be disregarded.* Second, *Human sympathy, although helpful, is insufficient for human needs.* Third, *Human sympathy is superseded by Divine.*

I.—HUMAN SYMPATHY IS HELPFUL, AND IS NOT TO BE DISREGARDED. Pity, compassion, and sympathy, are sometimes used as if their meaning were identical. The first two resemble each other very nearly in their significations; still, there is a shade of difference. "Pity" often implies an approach to contempt; "compassion" has more of tenderness in it. We may speak of *pitying* the wicked, or the hopelessly foolish: we only speak of *compassionating* those into whose feelings we can enter, and whose actions we may conceive ourselves performing. Again, "compassion" is sometimes felt for imaginary sorrows; "pity" seldomer. "Sympathy" implies more of fellow-feeling than either of the other terms, and is not restricted to subjects of pain, but may be equally felt for the pleasures of others. A certain degree of equality in station, age, mind, or qualities, is essential. We have greater *sympathy* with one who is nearly an equal.

"The human countenance smiles on those who smile, and weeps with those who weep," are words expressive of human sympathy. There is not a doubt that *fellow-feeling* is a source of most real consolation in loneliness and sorrow, and serves also to sweeten one another's joys. Experience and observation alike bear testimony to the fact that human sympathy is helpful, and is not to be disregarded. The fellow-feeling resultant from our larger or smaller circle of friendships is an element of joy.

In the work of life, for instance, how helpful is the sympathetic chord of brotherhood which vibrates through two natures. The

work may be more or less difficult, distance may render intercourse infrequent. Nevertheless, although life be none of the easiest, and fellow-feeling be an ingredient—in so far as outward expression is concerned—seldom found in our cup of joy, yet possessed, even in but feeble measure, and the sentiment is ours—

“And share

The inward fragrance of each other's heart.”

Is there anything more odious than that insensibility which wraps a man up in himself and his own concerns, and prevents his being moved with either the joys or the sorrows of another? Is there anything more Divine than that refined sensibility which enables a man to shake off all thoughts of self, and personal aggrandizement, and be lost in thought for others' good?

In *the sorrows of life* how helpful is sympathy. Perhaps the sunshine of life has been taken away by the death of our brightest and best. Comfort there is none. One big cloud overcasts our little world. There is no streak of sunlight to relieve the monotony of our sadness, and the following words are expressive of our state—

“Console if you will, I can bear it;
’Tis a well-meant alms of breath:
But not all the preaching, since Adam,
Has made death other than death.”

The self-same affliction has befallen your friend: your sorrow has been his; and the welling up in his heart of sympathy for you in your trial—as he calls to mind his own deep sorrow—has at least some sort of helpfulness for you, inasmuch as you can, and do, disburden yourself to him.

In *the joys of life*, also, human sympathy is helpful. As in our sorrows we need the sympathetic looks, words, and deeds of our fellows; so in our joys, fellow-feeling for us in our saved conditions of heart and life is most helpful, serving to sweeten our joys. In the first Biblical instance of a romantic friendship we are presented with a beautiful example of human sympathy. The deep, true, and lasting attachment of David and Jonathan is most touching. “The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul

of David, and Jonathan loved David as his own soul." This sympathetic bond of union was mutual, as the words of David clearly show—"Thy love to me was wonderful,—passing the love of women." The sort of sympathy which exists between these two friends is exemplified in the words—"And strengthened his hands in God."

In the life of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, there are not wanting examples of sympathy betwixt kindred spirits. Our Lord had His particular friends. We can readily pourtray Him at Bethany, in the house of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. We can also picture Him sitting next to the beloved apostle. The Master would indeed teach us that human sympathy is most helpful, and is not to be disregarded. All through His brief life of public service this element of sympathy was ever prevalent, and, not confined to His own friends, was lavished upon the out-cast with an unstinting hand.

"Not alone the just man's Friend,
Worthy lives didst Thou commend ;
But to those who sinned before
Saidst Thou, 'Go, and sin no more.'

"Thine the black and bitter bread,
Thine the busy, weary head,
Thine the ready, aching feet,
Thine the burden and the heat.

"With the myriads of us,
Didst Thou live and labour thus,
Saviour, and shall we refuse
Everything that Thou didst choose ?"

II.—HUMAN SYMPATHY, ALTHOUGH HELPFUL, IS NOT SUFFICIENT FOR HUMAN NEEDS. The sympathy existing between Christ and His disciples was very likely as helpful as any that could be enjoyed. For, although He was Divine, He was also human, and "made Himself of no reputation." Their attachment to Him, however, was by no means perfect. They were oftentimes opaque, as appears from the context: "We know not what He saith." They understood that He was to go away; but the

speedy departure and *speedy* return perplexed them. Our Lord's declarations respecting His death and resurrection, which appear plain to us who have the light of subsequent events, appeared very dark and enigmatical to the disciples. Even the sympathy of the best of the disciples would not altogether avail for the human needs of our Lord. And, in like manner, the best of human sympathy that men can enjoy will not suffice for their human needs. As in the case of our Lord, there are seasons when human sympathy is insufficient. Did not our Saviour, in the intensest moments of His life, "depart into a solitary place and there pray"? Did He not say, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder"? And we, too, must have these moments of solitude, if our spiritual life is to be quickened, and we are to know somewhat of the mysteries of godliness. In the minor, and partially in the major things of life, human sympathy is helpful, but it has its limits; and we reach a point in our lives when we find it powerless to help, when, indeed, it seems poor and insignificant, altogether insufficient to satisfy the cravings of our spirits. Such as are intensely spiritual will understand this, having been assured, even as Jacob of old, that to be truly appreciative of the things which make for his everlasting peace, man must be left alone: "And Jacob was left alone."

It is a blessed thing to enjoy the sympathy of dear and constant friends, and, whilst journeying together along the pathway of life, to seek the solution of some of life's problems. In such intercourse there is, doubtless, to be found much inspiration; there is mutual helpfulness. But then, at best, ere the pathway terminates, and our ideas have been somewhat clarified, our friend is suddenly taken to his rest. Even if he has been constant all through life—and it is often otherwise—his helpful sympathy is gone from us, and we are left to ourselves and God.

As has been already said, our Saviour was by no means insensible to human sympathies. Did He not love all mankind, and even seek their love? His disciples, too, He loved, and even unto the end. The end was now at hand, and His parting words to them, and prayer for them, prove how tenderly He loved them. Eleven only, of all who had ever followed Him,

remained on the night when He was betrayed. And did He not foresee that even their allegiance would not stand the last trial,—that they would forsake Him in the impending hour of darkness? “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone.” That Jesus was indifferent to the failure of those friends whom He had chosen out of the whole world can hardly be. Surely He felt it keenly: it must have contributed to the bitterness of the cup which He was about to drain. Still, it must not overcome Him, for He was sustained by higher sympathies; yes, He felt, as all His children may feel, the presence of a Higher Power: “And *yet* I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

III.—HUMAN SYMPATHY SUPERSEDED BY DIVINE. “The Father is with Me.” Here then we touch the very heart of our subject, and have inculcated from this passage independence of human sympathy. Not disregard of it, but an independence of it; a power of doing without it; a power which must live within us. The sympathy of our fellow-men cannot be disregarded; indeed, it would not be well that it should be. Not a doubt that the desire of it is one of the primary wants of our being, and that the comfort and happiness to be derived from it are inestimable. The lesson to be learned is that we must inure ourselves to do without it. We must, indeed, so discipline ourselves that if it should fail us we may not mourn, as utterly helpless, but be assured that we are not alone. Everyone must learn the lesson that he has to be superior to the need of human sympathy. Why, is it asked? Simply because if he do not, seasons will come when the support of that sympathy will be refused to him, and when he will consequently be left alone. This, too, is not mere supposition or remote probability, for hardly a life is without such seasons. Listen to a few examples.

Let me suppose that you have an end in view, an important moral end. You see it clearly, and apprehend the means which are requisite to promote or accomplish that end; and propose those means to the favour of other men. Alas! the end you see, they do not see at all, or do not see its importance. Hence, you meet with no sympathy

and feel somewhat desolate. But suppose you have foreseen this disappointment, and have guarded yourself against its effects. Suppose you have accustomed yourself to a spiritual independence and solitude, you will not give up at that end? No! no! You will be sensible of Divine help, and that will enable you to bear up against averted looks, cold words, sneers and ridicule. In short, though longing for human sympathy you will be able to go on without it.

Again, a subject interests you as you have no right to expect it can interest other men. They do not sympathize with you. You want the sympathy of your neighbours; but you cannot force it. Sympathy must be spontaneous or not at all. This cannot be, as your neighbours cannot feel as you feel. What then? Will you complain? Will you make yourself unhappy? No! no! You must be content to superintend and guide your own feelings, because you cannot reasonably demand that others should share them.

Suppose, again, that the sympathy of others ought to be given you, and yet is not, through their fault, their obtuseness, their frivolity, or their cruelty. What now? Are you going to despair, because there is a want of proper feeling in the world? No! no! The fact is plain they do not go along with you, that they leave you alone. Your solitude is to be supplied, how? Surely by remembering that Divine supersedes human sympathy.

Suppose another case. You have suffered loss, a great loss. Your grief is heavy upon you. You seek to have it alleviated. Your situation calls for sympathy, but you do not receive so much as you require. This may not be because there is a want of a good disposition to console you to the utmost, but sometimes because your friends lack the ability to put their sympathy into the most effective and consoling form. It is no good to accuse your friends of apathy, or to charge them with want of feeling. If they do not possess feeling, your accusations will not give it to them; and if they do possess it, your reproaches will add to their unhappiness without alleviating your own. It is very true that human sympathy, of the most perfect character, has a limited operation. Then, as one has said, "Bless it for what it

does, and demand not of it impossibilities or miracles. Bring your mind to the conclusion that there are woes which it cannot fully relieve, burdens which it cannot lift away from off your spirit, occasions when it must leave you comparatively alone, and when you must be made aware of its insufficiency, and aware of the need of something else, something mightier, something holier, for support and consolation."

There is also an intrinsic dignity in independence of human sympathy. Does not a person who is continually throwing himself upon the sympathies even of his friend, wear out those sympathies? As has been well said—"There is an aspect of mendicancy in his conduct which is felt to be troublesome, and which rather repels than secures the best regards of friendship and offices of charity. Whereas, a person who is careful not to intrude his sorrows on the attention of others, is respected for his manliness, and loved for his good sense and forbearance, and fully gains the sympathy for which he does not beg. Sympathies flow in upon such a man in free tides from all affectionate hearts . . . One powerful consideration, therefore, for the cultivation of independence on human sympathy is, that the best sympathy is finally given to independence. A bright example of this truth is the once deserted Saviour. What a crowd of sympathies, what a countless pilgrimage of affections now flock about Him on that loneliest spot in His own life, where He was betrayed, denied, and forsaken of men. All the sympathy which has been rendered to all the greatest and wisest of our race, is not to be mentioned in comparison with that unreckoned and inconceivable amount which goes forth, from age to age, and hangs round the image of the despised and crucified,—of Him who, in the garden of Gethsemane, in the hall of Pilate, on Calvary, was left alone, and yet was not alone, because the Father was with Him."

If we desire to know how this independence of human sympathy is to be acquired, we have but to turn to the example of our Lord, and refer to the words of our text. Jesus, though left alone, was not alone, because the Father was with Him. Like Him, we need not sink in the time of desertion, we too may be upheld of God. Like Him, we can spare the company, and

pardon the defection of friends, because we also can resort to the all-sufficient Source of love, and light, and mercy.

“Man’s wisdom is to seek
His strength in God alone ;
And even an angel would be weak,
Who trusted in his own.”

There is a proud and hard self-confidence which will, apparently, bear a man up through much tribulation. There is, however, no comfort, no relief, no refreshment, in such endurance. The real and consoling strength can only come from above ; can only be given from God ; can only be imparted by the conviction that God is present, that He hears, sees, sympathizes, and will reward. The want, the defects, the insufficiency of human sympathy, are only to be remedied by an abiding sense of the fulness and perfection of that love and care with which the Father watches over His children. Assured of His nearness, as was Jesus, then the desertion and isolation of human sympathy will not crush us. Whatever our loneliness, whatever our sorrow, in whatever way we may be disappointed or forsaken, a practical faith that the all-Father is near us fills up the void, and surrounds us with an eternal sympathy.

“Who is alone, if God be nigh ?
Who shall repine at loss of friends,
While he has One of boundless power,
Whose constant kindness never ends ;
Whose presence felt enhances joy,
Whose love can stop the flowing tear,
And cause upon the darkest cloud
The pledge of mercy to appear ?”

Withdraw not from men, but draw nearer unto God. Repel not human sympathies, however imperfect and inadequate they may be ; but above all cultivate those sentiments which render the presence of God a reality to your spirit. Then the seeming chilliness and insufficiency of human sympathy will cease to

afflict, because there is enjoyed the sufficiency of God. Then there will be communion and sympathy with Jesus Christ, who loved all men most deeply at that very hour when He was forsaken of all men, and who, when forsaken and alone, yet was not alone, because the Father was with Him.

DARLINGTON.

FRED. A. CHARLES.

The Old and the New Year.

“HE THANKED GOD, AND TOOK COURAGE.”—*Acts xxviii. 15.*

AS the outcome of his appeal to Cæsar, Paul was sent by Agrippa to Rome. On his way from Cæsarea to Italy, he encountered many dangers, especially in the Mediterranean Sea, where he was shipwrecked, but, by the mercy of God, was brought safe to land. For three months he enjoyed the hospitality of the people of Melita, then departed in a ship of Alexandria, and proceeded towards Rome. At Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns, Paul met several brethren who had heard of his coming; they came to see him, about whom they had heard so much, and to cheer him with their society and sympathy. The companionship Paul had on his journey, till now, had not been the most congenial; for he had travelled with “certain other prisoners,” guarded by a band of soldiers. Doubtless, these brethren who met Paul, were permitted to speak to him, and as the great apostle heard of the success of the gospel in Rome, and the love of the brethren, he thanked God, who always caused them to triumph, and he took courage in face of the trying ordeal through which he was about to pass. He had longed to see Rome, the mighty capital of the ancient world, and, though a chained prisoner, with an escort of soldiers, he felt there were many kindred hearts beating lovingly towards him, and that his Great Master would stand by him as his Defender and Friend.

We cannot but admire the *true* and *timely* sympathy of the

brethren who met Paul, to cheer him on his way. It was *thoughtful, heroic, unselfish, sincere, Christly*. It was fully appreciated by the apostle, who was of a tender and sympathetic nature; and shown in circumstances when such sympathy would be peculiarly appropriate and acceptable. Like a conqueror, rather than a captive, Paul proceeded towards Rome, *fearless of the face of man*, for he had seen a vision of the Great King, and enjoyed the stimulus of Christian sympathy.

God—in His great mercy—has led us to see the beginning of a new year, we have been brought safely through innumerable dangers. He has surrounded us with many mercies, with kind and sympathetic friends; we go bound into the unknown path of the future, not knowing what a day may bring forth; but our times are in God's hands, the Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. The example of the apostle is worthy of our imitation, when at Appii Forum, "he thanked God, and took courage." The text indicates—

I.—THE DEVOUT SPIRIT IN WHICH THE PAST SHOULD BE REVIEWED. "He thanked God." Thankfulness is *a duty* we owe to God, for "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." As we review the year which has just closed, we are reminded of (a) *Temporal mercies*. Every day we were fed, clothed, enjoyed the blessings of friendships and home. The year was crowned with the goodness of the Lord, His mercies were new to us every morning, and repeated every night. During the busy hours of the day, and the silent watches of darkness, His unseen hand sustained us, and underneath us were the everlasting arms. (b) *Spiritual supplies*. Though our *faith* sometimes staggered, and was frequently clouded, yet it was not allowed to utterly fail; though our *love* was feeble and fitful, yet its flame was fanned with the breath of Heaven, its heat sustained by the power of God; though our *hope* sometimes almost sank into despair, yet it was constantly revived by fresh manifestations of our Master's face; of His fullness we constantly received, and grace for grace. (c) *Victories achieved*. Every day we had to encounter the uprisings of depravity within, attacks of temptation from without, yet we were enabled to successfully resist; no weapon formed against us has prospered,

we have come off "more than conquerors through Him who hath loved us." (d) *Work accomplished*. Imperfectly and unworthily as our tasks were performed, our duties discharged, yet God has not dismissed us from His service, nor despised our efforts. He has helped us to work and witness for Him, has given us more success than we have deserved, and to Him be all the glory for ever. We are also reminded of (e) *Sins forgiven*. In everything we have fallen short of the glory of God, our best works and holiest duties have been marred by sin. But for the pity, patience, and pardoning mercy of the Lord, we should have been consumed. "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, neither rewarded us according to our iniquities." Surely our hearts,—with such a retrospect,—overflow with gratitude and joy. Unthankfulness is a heinous sin, evidence of hardness and coldness of heart; to be thankful, indicates *an appreciation* of the blessings received, as well as *an acknowledgment* of kindness on the part of the giver, and *indebtedness* on the part of the receiver.

"Let us, then, with gladsome mind,
Praise the Lord, for He is kind;
For His mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure."

The text also indicates—

II.—THE HEROIC SPIRIT IN WHICH THE FUTURE MAY BE ANTICIPATED. "And took courage." There are many things calculated to discourage us as we endeavour to prosecute the work of the Lord,—such as *our consciousness of the feebleness of our powers; the magnitude, importance, and solemnity of our work; the malignity and multitude of our foes; the inveterateness of evil; the seeming slowness of the progress of truth; the brief and fleeting character of our lives, &c.* But there is much to encourage us, to fill us with confident expectation, as we proceed into the untrodden pathway of the future, and address ourselves afresh to service for God. There are (a) *Inspiring memories*. Every mountain scaled, burden borne, enemy vanquished, victory won, is the earnest and pledge of further successes. (b) *Christian sympathy*. Paul had many brethren who felt for him in his

toils and trials, and were ready to come to his help in times of need ; so we have kindred spirits around us, to give us words of cheer, and a helping hand as we strive to serve our generation by the will of God ; and warring angels combat by our side, and encamp around our dwellings. But the most inspiring thought for the future is *(c) God is with us*. This kindled the courage of the apostle when all men forsook him, when he was thrust into the Roman prison, when there seemed but a step between him and death. He took courage, knowing confidently Whom he believed, and feeling fully persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had committed unto Him against that day. "If God be for us, who can be against us !" *God's purposes* are on our side ; He intends to make all things work together for our good. *His promises* are on our side ; no good thing will be withheld from us. He will give us grace now, and glory hereafter. *God's presence* is with us, to *cheer, defend, sustain, deliver*. His word is for *us*, as well as Israel. "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Courage gives strength, just as cowardice debilitates, and doubt paralyses. *Courage gives gladness*, it inspires hope, and anticipates, as well as helps to ensure victory. *Courage is contagious* ; just as fear will strike panic into the breasts of others, so pluck will enkindle enthusiasm, and propagate ardour. Courage in the breast will make a man a host in himself, while the want of it will make a host of armed men turn their backs in the day of battle, when victory might easily have been achieved by them. The trials, temptations, and conflicts of the future will have to be met, not in the aggregate, but *one by one* ; and the promise runs, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be ;" let us, therefore, march on at God's command, bold as a lion, firm as a rock ; resolved—by God's help—to be faithful even unto death.

CONCLUSION.—Let not our thanksgiving be merely the expressions of our lips, or a lively sense of favours to come ; let it be accompanied by thanksgiving, the outcome of the melody of the heart. Let our courage not be the outcome of *vain confidence*, nor *self conceit*, nor *recklessness*, nor *indifference* ; but the result of intelligent apprehension of the promises of God. Let

the devotion and heroism of our Christly lives, be the expression of our heartfelt thanks to God for His unspeakable gift; our courage,—in facing the events of time, and the solemnities of eternity,—the evidence of our complete and unshaken confidence in our eternal safety and complete salvation; in the ultimate universal triumph of truth and righteousness.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Heavenly Visions and Human Duty.

“WHEREUPON, O KING AGRIPPA, I WAS NOT DISOBEDIENT UNTO THE HEAVENLY VISION: BUT SHEWED FIRST UNTO THEM OF DAMASCUS,” &c.—*Acts* xxvi. 19, 20.

AN experience on the very threshold of Paul's spiritual life! An experience rare, it is to be feared, and uncommon—realised by few—fulfilled by still fewer! What is it? Never to disobey the heavenly visions, never to run counter to the heavenly voices, never to resist the heavenly influences. Most commonly we reverse and contradict the apostle's action in this matter. He saw, heard, felt. He gave himself up to the powers that, in that critical hour of his history, were playing all about him, and yielded to them; he was plastic and responsive. “O king, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: but shewed,” &c. The bulk of us, it is to be feared, let these influences pass by, and over us, and they get soon forgotten. We are arrested by the light, stirred and touched, momentarily, by the voice; there is a slight tumult within, but, alas! on the morrow, the world's glare and glamour make it all die out again, and the world's Babel-noises drown the music of those heavenlier voices that were calling us on to a higher and a diviner life. We do not let these visions and voices live before us, and command our homage and obedience.

Says Paul—“I was not disobedient,” and the sequel bears it out to the letter. Knight nor Crusader ever went forth with

grander chivalry, or more daring heroism, than did he; and that vision it was that became the mighty impulse that moved him; that vision and voice shaped his work, and gave him his life-mission as a preacher to the Gentiles. He seemed to say, "Master, command me; I go, I do, I obey; send me, use me as seems Thee best:" and to the last, after perils, and toils, rebuffs, and reproaches, he could dare to say—"I have finished my course," and the same voice that had bidden him to work, bade him henceforth to rest.

I.—OUR POSSESSION of "Heavenly Visions." Here it was a voice and a vision too,—it was the face and voice of Christ. And this is just as true for all of us. Behind the heavenly influences that play about our paths from veriest childhood, that try to arrest and touch and move us behind them all; in and through them all we, too, can hear these words of power and pathos, "I am Jesus." So said the voice to Paul, "'Twas I, Jesus, stopped thee; 'twas I threw the dazzling light, whose bright glare bowed thee to the earth." Behind light, and voice, and vision, there is to be traced the personal agency of the personal Lord. Let us thank God for such visions, and voices, and influences; providences, if you like, manifestations, *i. e.*, in some form or other, but adapted to serve God's purpose and His will concerning us. Where would Paul have been, and what would he have become but for this voice and vision from heaven? and where had we been, but that here and there, earlier or later, some such heavenly visions have shone about us? aye! stopped us, it may be, as Paul was stopped, in our way of rebellion, and suicidal selfishness and folly.

This is God's way of coming into contact with man. We are not to be left utterly to ourselves. Voice or vision shall declare to us what we are to be and do, and where to go. Men are not left. The arresting voice shall bid Saul stand still and look up; the heavenly vision shall be the dawn of a new history, and shape for him a nobler destiny. Heavenly visions and voices. Do not we all see and hear some such? Visions of a truer, better life—a spiritual "excelsior"—"the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Why? Visions came, even to the prodigal, of the plenty and peace, the love and light,

that dwelt in the far-away home, and a voice came with the vision—"Rise and return; the door is open, and thy Father waits for thee."

But for these heavenly visions and voices we should stand still in blankest ignorance or doubt, God knows whether. Thank God, lights do flash, and fingers do point, bright visions do make the face to smile, and the heart to rejoice, and set the being all astir with a tumult of joy and wonder. Have we not, all of us, had such, as the years have gone on? Early—it may be, some of us get them as did young Samuel, some later on as did the great Apostle; and do they not come, too, sometimes, when we have been neglecting Christ—in our way—persecuting and wounding Him; then have we not seen a face and heard a voice, "Why persecutest *thou* Me? and the call has come to us to rise and pray, and work, and take up our cross for the Master's sake. And ever after, further on, and down the path of Christian life, these voices speak and visions flash, and they utter to us, like some grand prophet, the wishes of the very heart of God! Then add to these the vision and voice that looks out and speaks from out the pages of the written Word. Add to this those ideals of higher Christian life; of duty and sacrifice, that come to us in those solemn pauses of life, when we seem to be in a heavenlier frame, when we see the men we would be, and the good we would do, and the life we would reach to; all these, which are of Heaven—heavenly—God-sent, God-directed, are visions, which it will be to our lasting blessedness to obey. "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Can we not, who are readers of this page, remember any such along the line of the years? They may have come in the House of Prayer, they may have come in some startling providence, dazing as that light, that ray, that flashed across the persecuting Saul. It may have been even in the dreams of night. They may have come in the home of childhood; but there and then they came, and the voice spake, and the influences stirred us. Can we, dare we say when they seemed to arrest us, to wrap us all about? "Whereupon I was not disobedient."

II.—OUR ATTITUDE towards these "Heavenly Visions." Paul's

was obedience. Quick upon the heels of the vision and voice you find him going forth on his God-given mission to "show" the Christ. Readily he went, quickly and joyously he went, first, to Damascus—aye, Damascus first—next to Jerusalem, all along the Judæan coasts, and next to the Gentiles.

Further on, too, he tells us how the Divine help came in fulfilling the Divine mission, and he tells his purpose to pursue the same path right onwards until he had touched the last spot where the hand of his Lord might lead him, and tell there, to some poor Gentile soul, the message of the love of the Christ of Bethlehem, and the Christ of Calvary.

How then shall we act if we obey the Heavenly Visions? Turn back, if He bid us, from our worldward wanderings; give up, if He bid us, our life of rebellion; throw down, as did Saul, the weapons of our hostility to Christ and truth, and seek to fulfil the Heaven-sent mission, and to realize the ideals of a life we have made to ourselves. Cease our indolence, and work; our selfishness, and put ourselves at Christ's command. All this is to obey the Heavenly Vision.

It may be they may never come back again to us. The bright light that flashed across the paths of earlier years, and the voice that then arrested us may never call us again by name—too late to sorrow for the heavenly visions that blessed our younger days! And then, Saul, or any man, left to ourselves what are we? what grow to? what is left us in the further future? Darkness—disaster—failure; a heart growing colder and darker; a conscience growing duller; a nature growing less sensitive; eyes blinder, ears deafer, hands weaker for the work of Christ. To obey means safety, peace, blessedness; to obey is to have God for us—in us—with us; to disobey is to have God against us; light and strength going from us at each step, and nothing in all this world can ever compensate a man for that—"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but showed first to them of Damascus . . . proving that this is very Christ."

To the path of such obedience may His good Spirit lead us, that we may not miss such blessedness and joy.—AMEN.

ACTON.

THEODORE HOOKE.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF
THE KINGS.

Subjects Worth Thinking About.

"AND THE KING OF ASSYRIA BROUGHT MEN FROM BABYLON," &c.
2 *Kings* xvii. 24-41.

THIS fragment of Israelitish history brings under our notice four subjects which run through all human history, and which find their illustration in the events of modern as well as ancient life.

I.—THE TYRANNY OF MAN. Here we find the Assyrians committing two great enormities on the men of Israel, driving them out of their own land into Assyria, and taking possession of their own country and home. "And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof." Who that king of Assyria was

at this time, who carried away the last remnant of the ten tribes into a foreign land, and brought from various parts of his own country, men to occupy their property and their homes, whether Shalmaneser or Isradoleon is a question not worth debating. He was a tyrant. The places from which he selected the men whom he placed in the cities of Samaria are mentioned. Cuthah, a city about fifteen miles N.E. from Babylon; Ava, situated on the Euphrates on the north of Babylon; Hamath, the chief city of Upper Syria; and Sepharvaim, supposed to be on the side of the Euphrates, lying about twenty miles from Babylon. Now there was tyranny in both cases. There was tyranny in taking the Assyrians from their own

countries and placing them in the cities of Samaria; as well as tyranny in taking away the ten tribes from Samaria into foreign regions. Had the exchange taken place with the mutual consent of both parties, there would have been no outrage on the rights of man, but it might, indeed, have conduced to the interests of both parties concerned. Men are constantly changing their countries, especially in this age when facilities for travelling are increasing every day, when the old countries are being over populated, their resources rapidly exhausting, and new and fertile regions opening up in every part of the globe. All this is right enough, as well as often necessary and wisely expedient. But to be forced away from home, this is tyranny, and such tyranny is not extinct even in our England. The tens of thousands that leave our shore every year for strange and distant lands, for the most part do it by a terrible coercion. Monopoly has stolen from them their land, and governments sanction the robbery. He is a tyrant who not only inflicts positive in-

justice on another, but who withholds from another his due. He is a tyrant who not merely outrages the rights of his fellow-men, but who does not practically recognise their needs and their woes. Tyranny is not confined to the throne of despots, but it sits in every heart where there is not a practical regard for the rights of others. It is in Belgravian mansions and ducal castles, where the groans of starving millions around are disregarded, as well as in the palace of the Czar of Russia where the rights of millions are trodden underfoot.

“Thinkest thou there is no tyranny
but that
Of blood and chains? The despot-
ism of vice,
The weakness and the wickedness
of luxury,
The negligence, the apathy, the evils
Of sensual sloth—produce ten thou-
sand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic
master,
However harsh and hard in his own
bearing.”—BYRON.

Notice—

II.—THE RETRIBUTIONS OF LIFE. “And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there that they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew

some of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore He hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land." Probably the lions had been in the land of Samaria before the settlement of the Assyrian colonists, but after their settlement these furious beasts of prey seem to have multiplied. Perhaps the colonists were too few in number to keep them down and to check their increase. Still, whatever the natural cause or causes of their increase, it was regarded by the new population as a retributive visitation. Their message to the king was, "The nations thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore He hath sent lions among them," &c. The law of retribution is ever at work in human history, not only in the lives of nations but in the lives of individuals. No man can do a wrong thing

without suffering for it in some form or other. Nemesis surely, though silently, treads on the heels of wrong. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap." The lions of retribution track our steps as sinners stealthily, and are ready to spring at any moment. We are far enough from saying that retribution here is adequate and complete, hence there is within all a "fearful looking for" of some future judgment. We do not fully discharge the debt, as we go on, it accumulates, and there is a balance to be settled in the great hereafter. Albeit the retribution here is a foretaste and pledge of a judgment to come.

"Nature has her laws

That will not brook infringement:
in all time,

All circumstances, all state, in every
clime

She holds aloft the same avenging
sword,

And sitting on her boundless throne
sublime,

The vials of her wrath, with Justice
stored,

Shall in her own good hour on all
that's ill be poured."—PERCIVAL.

Notice—

III.—THE PROSTITUTION OF RELIGION. The Assyrian king it would seem, in answer to

the alarm which his people, whom he had settled in Samaria, felt concerning the lions, conceived the plan of adopting religion as the remedy. "Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land." The priest which the king sent to them, seems to have been one of the exiled priests who had established his head-quarters at Bethel. It is not said this priest took a copy of the Pentateuch with him; perhaps he trusted to his religious intelligence and to his oral abilities. The fact of his being one of the exiled priests, and being settled in Bethel, would imply he was not a Levite but rather one of the calf-worshipping priests; his instructions, therefore, would most likely not be very sound or useful.

Now the question is, why did this Assyrian king introduce this religion? Not because he or his people *had any faith in it*. "Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in

the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt," &c. (verses 29-31.)

Several of the gods of these people are here mentioned. "*Succothbenoth*." The meaning of this word seems to be the tents or booths of the daughters, similar to those where the Babylonians celebrated impure rites. Here it is mentioned, as one of the deities, "*Nergal*," an idol which seems to have been worshipped under the form of a cock; from Layard, in his work on Nineveh and Babylon, we find that a cock was often associated with a priest on the Assyrian monuments. "*Ashima*," an object that seems to have been worshipped under the form of a he-goat, bald to the very skin. "*Nibhaz*." This deity was represented in the figure of a dog. Its worship seems to have prevailed in ancient Assyria, for at the mouth of what is called the Dog River, or Nahrel-Kelb, there is the image of a large dog. "*Tartak*." According to the Rabbis this deity was represented in the form of an ass. "*Adram-*

melech." This means the fire-king and was worshipped as a sun-god. The Assyrians worshipped the sun in three forms,—the rising sun, the meridian sun, and the setting sun. "*Anammelech*," a deity worshipped, some say, in the form of a hare, and some say in the form of a goat.*

These were the gods in which the king and the colonists seem to have had faith, and not in the one true and living God. Why then did the king send this priest from Bethel to impart to them a knowledge of the God of Israel? Simply as a matter of *selfish policy*. The attention that they paid to any representation that the priest made of the true God was partial, insincere, and selfish. "So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them, priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners," &c.

Here you have one of the million examples of that *religion of policy* that has abounded in all lands and times. In every page in history, nay in every scene of life, we find religion taken up as a means to an end, rather than as the grand end of being. Some use it as a means for secular advantage, others as a means for personal salvation—what is called the salvation of the soul. Rulers employ it as a means to govern the people, and priests employ it as a means to coerce men into ecclesiastical order or conventional morality. In all cases their own personal interests are by no means ignored. This is a prostitution of religion. True religion should ever be pursued as the supreme end of man. In it alone his highest obligations are fulfilled, his full powers employed, his true destiny realised. But, alas, everywhere we find it regarded as a subsidiary and partial element in man's calculations, experience, and life. What is here said applies to millions even in Christendom. "THEY FEARED THE LORD AND SERVED THEIR OWN GODS." The religion

* See Layard on Nineveh and Babylon; and Rawlinson's "Ancient Monarchies."

of policy will never rescue man from the rapacious jaws of the lions of retribution. Notice—

IV.—THE THEISTIC HUNGER OF SOULS. All these men, both the colonists and the Israelites, would have their gods; a god seemed to them as necessary almost as their life. "So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day." The same hunger for worship which the generations that preceded them possessed and developed, had been transmitted to these their children as an innate force in their spiritual constitution. The religious element in man is not a passing sentiment, not a traditional belief, not something superadded to his nature. It is the very core of his

being, the substratum in which all his higher faculties inhere. He who has this element in him (and who has not?) needs no argument to prove the existence of a God. If it be alive within him all such arguments are an impertinence. The existence of a Supreme Being is independent of all proof. It is written on the consciousness of human nature. Like the fact of our own being it is too near, too evident, too much a matter of living self, for outward argument to have any force. Faith in God springs from within. It is based on those immutable sentiments of the soul that outlive all theories and defy all scepticism. To deny the existence of God is to offer violence to all that is great and sacred in human nature.*

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

"If there be one thing upon this earth that mankind love and admire better than another, it is a brave man—it is a man who dares to look the Devil in the face, and tell him that he is a Devil."—GARFIELD.

* In our last article on Kings, page 387, on eighth line read, "unfortunate inheritor of wrong," instead of "inventor of wrong."

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

No. III.

The Sins of the Sect and the Sins of the Tribe.

“FOR THERE ARE MANY UNRULY AND VAIN TALKERS AND DECEIVERS, SPECIALLY THEY OF THE CIRCUMCISION: WHOSE MOUTHS MUST BE STOPPED, WHO SUBVERT WHOLE HOUSES, TEACHING THINGS WHICH THEY OUGHT NOT, FOR FILTHY LUCRE’S SAKE. ONE OF THEMSELVES, EVEN A PROPHET OF THEIR OWN, SAID, THE CRETIAN IS ALWAYS A LIAR, EVIL BEAST, SLOW BELLIES. THIS WITNESS IS TRUE. WHEREFORE REBUKE THEM SHARPLY, THAT THEY MAY BE SOUND IN THE FAITH.”—*Titus* i. 10-13.

In the preceding verses Paul stated one purpose for which he left Titus in Crete, viz., to set in order “the things that are wanting,” and to ordain Elders in every city. He recognised at once not only the importance of order in the new community, but also the importance of appointing men, who, intellectually and morally, were qualified for its establishment and continuance. In these verses he gives Titus directions as to his aggressive work in Crete. He was to do battle with sin. “For there are many unruly (men) and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert (overthrow) whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy

lucre’s sake.” The great work of the *gospel minister is to do battle with sin*. In the text, sin is referred to as appearing in two aspects, in *religious sect* and in *national character*.

I.—IN RELIGIOUS SECT.
“Specially they of the circumcision.” These, undoubtedly, are Judaising Christians, men who pretended to be converted to Christianity, men who sought not only to mingle Judaic elements with the new religion, but to inculcate and disseminate it in that form. Observe the description of sin as it appeared in this religious sect,—these men of the circumcision. Here is (1) *factiousness*. “Unruly.” Not only would they not bow to the established order of the Church, but not to the spirit

and principles of the new religion. They would not yield to the masterhood of Christ, the author and substance of the Gospel, they were self-willed. They would have a sect of their own. Another sin here mentioned is (2) *ostentation*. "Vain talkers." Vain, not merely in the sense of proud, but in the sense of emptiness. In truth, as a rule, the emptiest men, intellectually, are at once the most conceited and loquacious. They talk not for the edification of others, but for the gratification of themselves. Their fluency, whilst it wins the admiration of fools, deludes the ignorant, and disgusts the thoughtful. Another sin here is (3) *falsehood*. "Deceivers." All merely nominal Christians are deceivers. They practically misrepresent the doctrines they profess to hold. Another sin here mentioned is (4) *mischievousness*. "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert (overthrow) whole houses." "The translation should run, 'seeing they subvert,' &c. There was, indeed, grave cause why these men should be put to silence: the mischief they were doing in

Crete to the Christian cause was incalculable. It was no longer individuals that their poisonous teaching affected, but they were undermining the faith of whole families. For an example how Titus and his presbyters were to stop the mouths of these teachers of what was false, compare Matt. xxii. 34-46, when the Lord, by His wise, powerful, yet gentle words, first put the Sadducees to silence, and then so answered the Pharisees, that neither durst any man from that day ask Him any more questions."—*Dr. Ellicott*. Another sin is (5) *greed*. "Teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." All the speeches they made, all the influence they exerted, sprung from sordid motives. Sin has a thousand branches and but one root, and that root is selfishness. How many, in what we call the religious world, are found teaching things which they ought not, for "filthy lucre's sake," things that gratify popular taste, that agree with popular prejudice, chime in with the popular thought. All this to fill their pews, and to enrich their coffers.

Now these sins which are discovered in the religious sect, are prevalent outside of all religions; but they receive a peculiar colour, shape, enormity, and mischievousness when we find them in the religious realm. The devil is less hideous amongst his fellows in hell, than he is amongst the sons of God. Hence, to do battle with sin in these religious forms is the grand work of a true preacher; and truly, in this age, and here in England, he will find these sins on every hand. He will see *factionousness* building up sects, and little sects within sects; *ostentation*,—vain speaking, braggardism, sometimes cooing and sometimes bawling, everywhere; *falsehood*,—rogues robing themselves in the garb of sainthood, wolves in sheep's clothing; *mischievousness*, by their empty words and pernicious example, subverting "whole houses," filling the domestic air with poisonous cant; *greed*, the Gospel itself made a trade, and vested interests created in connection with doctrines and doings antagonistic to the life and spirit of Him whom they call

Master. Ah me! conventional religion is a calumny on the religion of Christ. Never was a Luther wanted in Christendom more than now. He is wanted to substitute the pure Gospel of Christ for the denominationalised Gospel.

Sin is here represented as appearing—

II.—In NATIONAL CHARACTER. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own said, The Cretans are alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies (idle gluttons)." There are three sins mentioned here which seem to have prevailed amongst the Cretans as a race. (1) *Lying*. "The Cretans are alway liars." Who made this charge against the Cretans? Paul says "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own." The quotation is from a poem on "Oracles," by Epimendes, of Phœstus, who flourished 600 years B. C., lived to the age of 150, and was supposed to have been a sleeper in a cave for 57 years. He appears to have deserved the title prophet in the fullest sense. Plato speaks of him as a Divine man. The Cretans were characterised by the sin of lying,—“alway liars.” This expression was

quoted by Callimachus in his "Hymn to Zeus," and well known in antiquity. "The very word to Cretise (*Kretizein*), or to play the part of a Cretan, was invented as a word synonymous with to deceive, to utter a lie; just as *Corinthiazein*, to play the part of a Corinthian, signified to commit a still darker moral offence. Some writers suggest that this despicable vice of lying was received as a bequest from the early Phœnician colonists." Another sin mentioned is (2) *Sensuality*. "Evil beasts." Not only liars, but gross and sensual, living *in* animalism and for it. All men may be called "beasts" who attend to their animal appetites as means of gratification rather than of relief. He who seeks happiness from his senses rather than from his soul is a beast; he who seeks it from without rather than from within is not better than a beast. The happiness of a true man cannot stream into him from without, it must well up from the depths of his own high thinkings and pure affections. Another sin here is (3) *Gluttony*. "Slow bellies (idle gluttons)." Their

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gluttony made them dull, heavy, and indolent. Such are what may be called tribal or national sins, they were not confined to the Cretans, but for them the Cretans were notorious. These are *national*. But are these sins extinct in England? Have we no lying here? Our social air is impregnated with falsehood. Have we no sensuality and gluttony? Yes, alas, tens of thousands are every day pampering themselves with luxuries, whilst millions are being starved to death. Here then are common sins with which the preacher has to do battle. He has to "rebuke them sharply that they may be sound in the faith."

CONCLUSION.—A true preacher, then, has no easy task. He has to wage fierce battle with the sins that are around him,—the *sins of the sect* and the *sins of the tribe*. He is not to pander to men's tastes, nor to battle with mere opinions and theories, but with *sins*; he must "resist unto blood, striving against sin." "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Seedlings.

Piety in its Principle, Development, and Blessedness.

"BLESSED IS EVERY ONE THAT FEARETH THE LORD: THAT WALKETH IN HIS WAYS."—*Psalms* xxviii. 1.

HERE we have—

I.—Piety in PRINCIPLE.

"*Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord.*" Fear, not servile fear. It means *loving reverence*. The love to God that constitutes piety is characterised by two things—

First: *Predominancy*. Most men have a kind of love for the Supreme, that flows through them with other natural emotions, but attains no ascendancy over other sentiments, no control over the other faculties. The love to God that constitutes piety, must be predominant, must be the controlling disposition, must become the moral monarch, occupying the throne, wearing the crown, and wielding the sceptre. "Love the Lord with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might," &c. This piety is characterised—

Secondly: By *permanency*. Perhaps, in most minds, the sentiment of love to God, of gratitude, adoration, and even of reverence, arises at times: especially when

moving amidst the grand and beautiful in nature, or experiencing the enjoyment of some special blessings. But this sentiment, to become piety, must be crystallised, and settled as a rock. "An everlasting load-star," says *Carlyle*, "that beams the brighter in the heavens the darker, here on earth, the earth grows." Now this predominant, permanent love to God, is the principle of piety. It is the embryo of all excellence in all worlds. It is a seed out of which grows all that is beautiful and fruitful in the Eden of God. There is—

II.—Piety in DEVELOPMENT.

How is this principle rightly developed? Not in mere songs and hymns, and prayers, and ceremonies, but in conduct. "*That walketh in His ways.*" "*His ways,*" the ways of truth, honesty, purity, and holy love. True piety is not a dormant element sleeping in the soul, like grain buried under the mountains, it struggles

into form, and takes action, it walks, and its walk is onward and upward.

III.—Here is piety in BLESSEDNESS. “*Blessed is every one.*” Religion carries with it blessedness. “Religion,” says *Sir Humphrey Davy*, “whether natural or revealed, has always the same beneficial influence on the mind. In youth, in health, and prosperity, it awakens feelings of gratitude, and sublime love, and purifies, at the same time, that which it exalts; but it is in misfortune, in sickness, in age, that its effects are most truly and beneficially felt: when submission in faith, and humble trust in the Divine will, when duties become

pleasures, undecaying sources of consolation, then it creates powers which were believed to be extinct, and gives a freshness to the mind which was supposed to have passed away for ever, but which is now renovated as an immortal hope. Its influence outlives all earthly enjoyments, and becomes stronger as the organs decay and the frame dissolves; it appears as that evening star of light in the horizon of life, which we are sure is to become, in another season, a morning star, and it throws its radiance through the gloom and shadow of death.”

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

The Unholy Life.

“LET THEM BE AS THE GRASS UPON THE HOUSE-TOPS, WHICH WITHERETH AFORE IT GROWETH UP: WHEREWITH THE MOWER FILLETH NOT HIS HAND; NOR HE THAT BINDETH SHEAVES HIS BOSOM. NEITHER DO THEY WHICH GO BY SAY, THE BLESSING OF THE LORD BE UPON YOU: WE BLESS YOU IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.”—*Psalm cxxix.* 6-8.

THREE things are here suggested concerning the unholy, the wicked, the immoral. Such a life is

I.—TRANSIENT. It is like “*grass upon the housetops, which withereth before it groweth up.*” This, indeed, is true of the life of all men. “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the

flower of the field.” But *especially* the life of the unholy. Wickedness is inimical to longevity. What are all the possessions, pleasures, the pomps, and grandeurs of unholy men! Mere fading flowers of the field. “I have seen the wicked in great power spreading himself like a

green bay tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not." Such a life is

II.—USELESS. "*Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand; nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.*" Ungodly men may leave behind them their worldly possessions that may become useful to others; but what they leave behind them morally in the way of sound teaching and life-example is worth nothing; nay, it is worse than worthless. Verily, the lives of

ungodly men are useless lives. Such a life is

III.—UNBLESSED. "*Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you.*" Who can bless the memory of the wicked, the memory of those who have lived lives entirely selfish, sensual, secular, utterly regardless of the interests and rights of others? Who can bless such? they can only be cursed.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

Divine Forgiveness.

"THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE."—*Psalms cxxx. 4.*

FORGIVENESS is love in the *highest form*, and this is love in God. He has not the love of gratitude. He has never received favours and can never receive favours. He has not the love of adoration. There is no God beside Him; all other beings, even the loftiest, are infinitely inferior to Him. But He has the love of forgiveness. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." "Who is a pardoning God like Thee?" Divine forgiveness, it should be

remembered, is unlike human forgiveness in almost every respect.

I.—It is not an act that TAKES PLACE OUTSIDE OF THE OFFENDER. When a human father forgives his offending child, or a human sovereign his offending subject it is an outward act. But Divine forgiveness is an inner change, it is a moral revolution; the soul breaking away from its past—its past masters, purposes, and life. The pardon which man bestows on an offender does not necessarily change the character of the offender, and does not furnish an absolute guarantee for better conduct in the future.

II.—It is not an act PROMPTED

BY ENTREATIES. A father forgives his offending child because of the child's importunate appeals, and the king his rebels for the same reason. But Divine forgiveness is uninfluenced. He is essentially a forgiving God, and no entreaties need alter His purposes of mercy.

III.—It is not an act EXERCISED WITH LIMITATION. In human forgiveness there is a limitation to persons, only a few of the offenders are selected for the favour. Limited also to time. He who has been forgiven more than once is not likely to receive such a favour again, and his chances decrease with every repetition of the offence. But in Divine forgiveness there is no

limitation. "Abundantly pardon." "Seventy times seven." "Though your sins be as scarlet," &c. "He is a God ready to forgive."

IV.—It is not an act of EXCITED SYMPATHY RATHER THAN PLAN. The forgiving act of man is generally excited by commiseration for the offender, it is not the plan of his life, it is an occasional act. But Divine forgiveness is a plan settled, eternal, immutable. His forgiveness delivers men not only from the consequences of sins, but from the sins themselves. "He sent His Son to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

Aiming at Things Too High.

"NEITHER DO I EXERCISE MYSELF IN GREAT MATTERS, OR IN THINGS TOO HIGH FOR ME."—*Psalm cxxxi. 1.*

I.—There is a sense in which this CANNOT be done. It is the instinct of ambition to aim at high things. In a moral sense we cannot aim at things too high. We cannot aim at spiritual intelligence that is too high, spiritual goodness that is too high, spiritual fellowship that are too high. It is our duty to aim after God the Most High, to aim after assimilation to

His character and acquaintance with His works, a blessed fellowship with Himself. In a *moral* sense there is nothing too high for us to aim at.

II.—There is a sense in which this is COMMONLY done. In a worldly sense men are everywhere aiming at things "*too high*" for them, things beyond their capacity, things that lie beyond the reach of

their faculties and opportunities. This is one of the *great* evils of life. We see it—

First: In *literature*. We have men everywhere aiming at being great poets, great historians, great critics, and after they have struggled for years they are failures. They have the mortification of finding their works neglected, ignored, and, what is worst, perhaps, sinking into contempt. We have illustrations of this—

Secondly: In *commerce*. Men aiming at mercantile results that transcend their powers, engaging in undertakings which they are utterly incapable of prosecuting with success. Hence society abounds with broken-down tradesmen and crushed and broken-hearted merchants. We have illustrations of this—

Thirdly: In *politics*. How often we find ambition inspiring men to struggle for political place and power who are destitute of a natural capacity to discharge the responsibilities of the high office. Political history abounds with examples of political failures. We have illustrations of this—

Fourthly: In *ecclesiasticism*. Men striving to become great preachers, failing and sinking into contempt through the vanity of their attempts, men becoming preachers and bishops whose capacities only qualify them for the humbler services of life.

CONCLUSION.—Let us not aim at things “*too high*” for us. Remember the fable—When frogs attempt to swell into the higher animals they burst.

LONDON. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke iii. 22.

(*Epiphany.*)

INTERESTING as may be the Divine appearance recorded in this verse; it is more *instructive* to dwell upon the expression of Divine pleasure with which it closes. Respecting the satisfaction of the Eternal Father in the Divine Son, we may say that it was found (1) In what that Son was in Himself; in His absolute purity and perfect

goodness. (2) In the fact that He was entering on a mission which possessed the Divine approval; for the work of Christ did not *secure* but *expressed* the compassion of the Eternal Father. (3) In the spirit in which the Son was entering on the work which He came to do,—the spirit of entire devotedness.

Treating these words as they bear on our own relation to God, we may let them suggest to us—

I.—THAT WE ALSO STAND IN THE FILIAL RELATION TO THE DIVINE FATHER. "Now are we the sons of God." As those who have come to themselves and returned unto Him, who have put away sin and are found "in" Jesus Christ, we are God's children, and *should realize that we are*. We should sing and pray and live as those who are beloved of God, in whom He takes a deep delight: not, indeed, unmindful of the fact that He will be pained by our forgetfulness, our disobedience, our negligence, our insubmission; but resting and rejoicing in the truth that to us also the Father of all is ready to say, "Ye are My beloved children."

II.—THAT WE MAY GIVE JOY TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER BY UNDERTAKING SOME MISSION OF LOVE. Small, indeed, must any mission of ours be in comparison with that on which the Son of God was now going forth. Yet not so small as to be invisible to the eye, or indifferent to the mind of our Father. We are not to be mere copyists of Christ; if we only aim at that, His purpose concerning us will not be fulfilled; we are to be charged with His spirit, and governed by His principles. Yet do we well to follow in His footsteps by entering on some "work" which shall be, in its humble measure, to us what His work

was, in its glorious magnitude, to Him. The entrance on another year is a most suitable time for asking ourselves whether there is not some mission of love to which we can address ourselves, which will be within the reach of our resources, and which we may carry out with benefit to some human hearts.

III.—THAT WE SHOULD SEEK TO SATISFY OUR SAVIOUR BY THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WE UNDERTAKE IT. As our Lord entered on His work in a spirit which was well-pleasing to His Father, so should we undertake any work in our Master's cause and name in the spirit which He will approve. We may count on His gracious smile, on His blessed benediction, if we go forth in the spirit of (a) genuine sympathy with our fellow-men, (b) an earnest desire to promote the glory of God, (c) a willingness to spend that which is precious, and to be held of little account among men, if only we can render real service, (d) a sense of our insufficiency in ourselves. This last leads us to the final thought, viz.,

IV.—THAT WE MUST LOOK EARNESTLY AND PRAYERFULLY FOR THE OUTPOURING OF THE DIVINE SPIRIT: not the outward and visible manifestation, but the inward prompting, the spiritual working, the gentle and gracious

but mighty and victorious energies wrought in the secret places of the soul.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.
BRISTOL.

Luke ii. 51.

(*First Sunday after Epiphany.*)

"HIS MOTHER KEPT ALL THESE SAYINGS IN HER HEART."

HERE we have the highest truth and its most sacred shrine, or the Treasure and its Treasury.

I.—THE TREASURE. "These sayings." They were utterances about The Christ. (1) All truth is treasure, but truth about Him is the most precious of all truth, for since He is Son of God, Son of Man, "Saviour of the world," it must bear on God, on man, on sin and its conquest. (2) Truth comes to us through many channels, and wherever it comes it is treasure. The rivers that bear it always carry gold. To Mary this truth, "these sayings," had come by many channels—angels, shepherds, and magi—and subsequently, and best of all, from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. However it came she kept it. Our question should ever be, not who says it? but is it true? Too many do, like rustics in a great picture gallery, talk more of the frames than of the paintings.

II.—THE TREASURY. "In her heart." That is the shrine for "these sayings"; the treasury for

truth. For such a treasury is (1) *Secure*. What is written on the heart is the only imperishable literature. Just as thousands of years after the leaf fluttered and fell you find the fossil in perfect outline and delicate tracery in some soil, so milleniums hence truth that the heart received will be found to be conserved and complete. Such a treasury is (2) *Useful*. In the heart "these sayings" are of highest use (*a*) to the *possessor*. They are of no use merely in his intellect. They must be loved, and so spiritually discerned, for

"Though the blind man hold a lantern,
Yet his footsteps stray aside."

(*b*) To *others*. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," and so does the life. Where "these sayings" are in the heart of hearts their echoes travel far and near to teach and bless, their radiance streams forth to guide and cheer. This was the influence on Mary of keeping these sayings in her heart. Her future *interpreted to her* much that had thus been stored up. And her future *utilised for others* much that she had thus early learned. So it ever is. The strata of the soul are rich often in long buried and slowly accumulating wealth, if, indeed, truth about Christ has been received and "kept" there. EDITOR.

John ii. 3, 4.*(Second Sunday after Epiphany.)*

JESUS Christ was not an ascetic. He did not hold Himself aloof from human society, nor from the joys and converse and friendships of human life. The gathering of kinsmen, neighbours, and friends for social intercourse, and for the refreshment of mind and body at a common table, is a thing upon which Christ has put His sanction as our Teacher and Example. With His mother and His disciples He went to a wedding feast. In the midst of the rejoicings His mother came to Jesus with the tidings, "they have no wine." The bridegroom's liberality had reached the limit of his means, for probably he was of a humble calling, a fisherman, or a craftsman of some kind. The mother of Jesus felt a tender anxiety to meet the wants of the guests according to the Eastern custom on such occasions. This thoughtfulness and hospitable solicitude was very beautiful and graceful and womanly. A spirit such as this wonderfully gladdens life, and is the very soul of all neighbourly rejoicing. Three thoughts are indicated in Christ's reply to His mother.

I.—THE SOLITARINESS OF CHRIST IN HIS WORK. "Woman, what have I to do with thee." This does not seem a kind reply

To our ears there is apt to be a tone of sternness in the words. "Woman!" Jesus speak like that to His mother! Particularly, I believe, do children think it strange that He should so have spoken. But there was not, as we might be sure there could not be, even a trace of unkindness or coldness in Christ's reply. It was the custom of the time to adopt this form of address. To the Samaritan woman at the well, to whom his heart had gone out in Saviourly pity, he said, "Woman." To His mother, as she stood at the foot of the cross, His farewell word was, "woman." To Mary Magdalene, at the Sepulchre, his greeting was, "woman." It was not a word of severity but of tenderness and love. But there is the rest of the reply:—"What have I to do with thee." What did Christ mean? Was she not His mother? Was He not united to her by the closest tie of nature? But there was no reference to the natural relationship between them. When she told Him that they had no more wine, certain hopes and fond dreams were filling her heart. She imagined that the time had come for Him to reveal His power, and by a stroke to impress the people with His greatness, and gather them in homage around Him. But these aims and hopes He could not share with her. There

was a wide gulf between her thoughts and His purposes, and He indicated this diversity. "What have I to do with thee?" What oneness is there between Thee and Me in this matter? In the interrogative form of His reply He suggested, with beautiful tenderness, her misunderstanding of His work in the world. Christ was alone; His thoughts and purposes were too high and Divine for even His mother to comprehend them. His work was not understood by those in closest contact with Him. His brethren said, "He is beside Himself." His disciples did not enter into His mission. Only One was truly with Him—the Father who had sent Him.

II.—THE MORAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST INVOLVED PROLONGED LABOUR AND SACRIFICE. "Mine hour is not yet come." It was not by a miracle that Christ could fulfil the work His Father had given Him to do. To astonish and excite the people by a display of His power would be of little avail. If He would establish the Kingdom of God in the world, become the King of men, take hold of human life and redeem it, draw all men unto Himself, then, not even for Christ, would this be easy. He must do something more than work a miracle. He must teach, and suffer, and labour,

and die. The way to His throne was long and rugged. He accepted all this. He did not think to attain the joy that was set before Him by one brief, easy bound. Slowly, step by step, taking all the trials that came, meeting all the difficulties that arose, enduring all the sacrifice that was asked of Him, He would pass on to the fulfilment of His work. Here is a deep lesson for human life. "No cross no crown;" "great gains great pains." No victory without conflict; no height without the toilsome climbing.

III.—THE LIFE OF CHRIST HAD ITS SUPREME HOUR. Knowing who He was, the Divine Man, the world's Saviour, there is no period of His life that can be regarded as without great significance. Still there was one hour that was pre-eminent, the hour of His death. He always spoke of His death as His supreme hour,—“My time is at hand,” “Father, the hour is come.” It was the hour when all the work and suffering, and sin-bearing and revelation of His life was crowned and consummated; and when He was made the Perfect Captain of our salvation. There is for us, too, power in sacrifice. If we do not shrink from it, but endure it heroically and in love, it will give us power to bless and save men.

BRISTOL. THOMAS HAMMOND.

Matthew viii. 7.*(Third Sunday after Epiphany.)***"I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM."**

THE healing works of Christ are prominent themes in the study of that manifestation of Him of which this season speaks to multitudes in Christendom. For His curative miracles are not only *seals* of His authority, but *signs* of His redemptive grace. For as physical evils are at once *effects* and *emblems* of sin, so their removal is the parable of redemption from sin. We may well let the central impression produced on our minds by the narrative before us be *the grace of Christ*. His short, decisive sentence reaches our understanding and our hearts as—

I.—A word of KINDNESS. "I will come." This assurance was an indication (1) of *response*. The tale of sorrow has reached the heart as well as the ear of the Lord, and has not fallen upon stony ground, but upon good soil, where it at once germinates sympathy (2) The response was *prompt*. "I will come." Often sympathy is sluggish, kind feeling slow in determining action. Not so here. (3) The response was *complete*. "I will come." No mere sending, no benevolence by proxy, but the putting forth of personal, practical effort. This is

the kindness (*a*) in which we may rejoice as revealing God's kindness to us. (Titus iii. 4.) (*b*) And which we are to imitate in our social life. (Ephesians iv. 32.) The word is—

II.—A word of MIGHT. "I will come and *heal* him." There is no promise of endeavour, but of accomplishment. Not to see, nor to pity the servant only, but certainly to heal him. This confidence is but one aspect of that sublime *egoism* which distinguishes The Christ. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." All the recovery from physical, social, and spiritual disorder, for which Humanity cries, is possible only, and possible completely, in Christ. "The Sun of Righteousness shall rise," &c. The word is—

III.—A word of CONDESCENSION. "I will come and heal *him*." (1) Jesus was not going to a great group of sufferers, as He often did, but to a lonely man. His sympathy, His journey, His energies, should be at the disposal of one. (2) Jesus was not going to the great, or rich, or famous, but to a servant, *i.e.*, a slave. Thus is it in God's great and gracious work of saving men. "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him." The love of our Blessed Lord, is love with the downward look. EDITOR.

Breviaries.

Duty Difficult, but Delightful.

“MY YOKE IS EASY, AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT.”—*Matthew xi. 30.*

Notwithstanding this statement of our Lord's that the Christian life is an easy yoke and a light burden, it cannot be denied that, considered in itself, the daily following of Jesus is a work of no little difficulty. Let this first take our attention. I.—THE DIFFICULTY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. (a) *The New Testament representations of this life show that it is hard. It is spoken of as a battle, a race, a striving to enter a strait gate, a toilsome journey along a narrow way, a daily cross-bearing. Here Jesus calls it a yoke, a burden. (b) Christ's own life was a struggle. How fierce, who shall say? (c) The lives of the New Testament saints were hard. Paul's, Peter's, Stephen's.*

“They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil, and pain.”

(d) *Present-day Christian life is not easy. The conventional, the carnal, the hollow, the false meet every soul with temptations. II.—THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S DECLARATION. Notwithstanding all the difficulty of a daily imitation of Christ, yet are His words true,—“My yoke is easy,” &c. (a) They are made true by love. It is a positive delight to carry out the hardest practicable command of one supremely loved. The thought of difficulty does not enter the mind. Affection can lighten any load. Many have felt it an easy thing to give up life itself for human love. As in the realm of your daily life the magic touch of love's tender hand banishes your pain, and trial, and care, so is it also in the realm of the religious life. (b) The words are made true by grace. “He hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee,” &c. (2 Cor. xii. 9.) (c) The words are made true by the vision of faith. (See Romans viii. 18, and Acts vii. 55-57.) By the love that binds the Christian to the Lord, by grace vouchsafed according to our need, and by the vision of faith, the vision of the heavenly glory, the vision of the Son of Man, as He stands at God's right hand, surely His yoke becomes easy and His burden becomes light.*

MORETON-IN-MARSH.

J. KIRK PIKE.

Heaven : a Garden.

“THE PARADISE OF GOD.”—*Rev. ii. 7.*

THIS Persian word, derived from the Sanscrit, pictures an ornamental garden. From the lips of Christ, and afterwards of Paul, it obtained its highest significance, as describing Heaven itself. So reading the word we are led to reflect that—I.—Heaven is not merely a state, but A PLACE. Men try to be too sublimely immaterial when they deny the thought of locality to human conceptions of Heaven. *Dr. Chalmers* says we “make it a lofty aerial region, floating in æther, suspended on nothing.” Are we not wrong then? For (1) is it not probable that God is the only pure Spirit? (2) Do not all human instincts, and all Scriptural revelations point to a place? Clearly the word of our text warrants this. II.—Heaven is a place of SURPASSING BEAUTY. Not only this word, but all the imagery of the New Testament, leads us to imagine Heaven as a world where our yearning after the beautiful will not be destroyed, but satisfied; where the loveliness of earth will find its fulfilment and crown. Do stars and flowers die because we pass away? III.—Heaven is a place of APPROPRIATE LABOUR. The word has a backward look. In the primal Paradise man was put “to dress it and to keep it.” God ever works, angels work; God’s servants shall serve, &c. IV.—Heaven is a place of God’s SPECIAL HABITATION. It is a most sacred reminiscence of Paradise that the Lord God was there amid the trees of the garden. The central glory of Heaven is the felt presence of God.

EDITOR.

Heaven : a Temple.

“THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD.”—*Rev. iii. 12.*

THESE words are sufficient to bring before us a very vivid conception of some of the chief aspects of Heaven. I.—THE PLACE. On earth, as necessary results of our forgetfulness of God, our profanity, our crass secularity, we are obliged to have Temples. These are necessary because

of evil, and are, in some sense, necessary evils. Heaven has "no Temple" in it, because it is all Temple. For by Temple, we understand (a) a special structure of God. (b) A special residence of God. (c) A special meeting-place with God. (d) A special scene of worship of God. All this Heaven is. II.—THE WORSHIP. There are false Temples, crowded with false deities. This is the true Temple, filled with the true God. So that, noting the worship of Heaven, we observe (1) its object. The cry, the instinct, the constraining impulse there is, "worship God." (2) Its nature. The worship is (a) *unanimous*, none there have a dumb devil. (b) *Constant*. No intermittent, spasmodic sentimentalisms. "They worship day and night." (c) *Joyous*. They sing. "Is any among you merry, let him sing," and their hallowed mirth compels song. (d) *Perfect*. For it is symbolised by music, and ideal music is the appropriate and harmonised utterance of all the varied emotions of the soul.

EDITOR.

Heaven: a City.

"THAT GREAT CITY, THE HOLY JERUSALEM."—*Rev.* xxi. 10

THIS figure of Heaven suggests—I.—ITS RELATION TO GOD'S EMPIRE. What the Metropolis is to a country, Heaven is to the universe. (a) *The central influence of the kingdom*. (b) *The dwelling-place of its chiefest and strongest*. (c) *The residence of its Sovereign*. II.—ITS MARVELLOUS CONSTRUCTION. (a) Heaven is a *vast city*—a city, not a mere hamlet for a handful of the elect. (b) Heaven is a *secure city*. Its walls, its gates, &c. "Nothing can hurt or destroy." (c) Heaven is a *magnificent city*. Nothing impoverished, no bye-ways of shame, no lurking places of misery; its very streets are of gold. III.—ITS FAMOUS POPULATION. The population is (a) *immense in number*; "a great multitude," &c. (b) *Honourable in occupation*. Jerusalem a city of priests; Athens, of sages; Rome, of soldiers; London, of shopkeepers; Heaven, of saints, who serve God day and night. (c) *Holy in character*. This the glory of the population; they are robed in white. Their moral lustre is their beauty.

EDITOR.

Burden-bearing.

“BEAR YE ONE ANOTHER’S BURDENS,” &c.—*Galatians vi. 2.*

THEN men—good men—have their burdens ; that they have them is well known and certain. These are of different kinds. I.—There is the burden of *responsibility*. This is not the same in all persons, or in the same person at all times. Learning, education, light, physical condition, and such like must be taken into consideration. II.—There is the burden of *fear*—the fear that comes of unbelief. How Jesus warned His disciples against this. III.—There is the burden of *guilt*. Some men do not feel this. A sight of the Cross of Christ the only way to be rid of it. These burdens not the ones here referred to. The burden referred to in the text is made up of the trials, sorrows, and disappointments which are incident to the present life and is (1) *Universal*. None in any station of life are exempt from it. “*Man is born unto trouble,*” &c. *In attempting to flee from it we often flee into it.* (2) *Variable*. It becomes more or less heavy according to the spirit in which we receive it. Compare *Gen. xlii. 36* with *2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.* (3) *Useful*, not in itself considered, but as overruled and sanctified by God. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” (See *Heb. xii. 11.*) *We must bear one another’s burdens.* This implies acquaintance with one another which should be true of members of the same church. “How can we bear,” &c. (1) *By prayer* (*Acts xii. 5.*) ; (2) *By sympathy* (*John xi. 19 ; Heb. ii. 18, and iv. 15, 16.*) (3) *By active benevolence* (1 *John iii. 17.*), “*and so fulfil,*” &c. (a) *The law of love to Christ* (*Matt. x. 42*) ; (b) *The law of resemblance to Christ* (*John xiii. 14, 15*) ; (c) *The law of obligation to Christ* (*John xiv. 15*).

PENZANCE.

J. W. SAMPSON.

Now ; a New Year’s Word.

“Now.”—*2 Cor. vi. 2.*

THE time-view contained in this word is I.—THE ONLY CERTAIN POSSESSION OF ALL MEN. The past is gone ; the future may never come ; the present, certainly, is in their hands. II.—THE ETERNITY OF FOOLS. They dream it is abiding. (1) They look for all results “now” ; (2) They judge all by what appears “now.” They throw their whole fortune on to the gambling table of “now.” III.—THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE WISE. They use it for (1) Decision for God ; (2) For culture ; (3) For blessing others.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

DAVID AND THE BOOK OF PSALMS.*

A STUDY FOR PREACHERS.

1 *Sam.* xvi. to xxxi. 2 *Sam.* i. to xxiv. 1 *Kings* i. and ii.
1 *Chron.* xi. to xxix.

PERHAPS ten volumes on the Book of Psalms might be written with greater ease and less thought than three. But voluminousness would render the work less accessible to those whose financial resources are limited, and whose time for study is curtailed. In perusing the work I am now concluding, my readers will probably discover much that many will deprecate, and a little that some may approve.

First: There is MUCH THAT MANY WILL DEPRECATE. Among the things that will be deprecated by the *many*, in all likelihood are the following:—

(1.) *The low estimate I have formed of David's moral character.* In orthodox expositions, in popular discourses (oral and written), in religious literature of the current type, David is held up as the "man after God's own heart," as a paragon amongst the kings of the earth, as an illustrious champion of the right, and as a peer in the realm of sainthood. But when I carefully peruse his history as given in Scripture, I find that *their* David is a mere fiction, a creature of their imagination, and not the veritable man whose true and full biography is sketched *nowhere but* in the First and Second Books of Samuel (commencing at chap. xvi. of the First Book); 1 Kings, chaps. i. and ii.; and 1 Chronicles, chaps. xi. to xxix.

As an example of this, a minister possessing a very extensive library, with considerable Biblical intelligence, of rigorous orthodox notions, and who has lived upwards of seventy years in the world, had a long conversation with me a few months ago, on the character of David. To him he was not only a model saint, a hero of heroes in all moral greatness, but the type of Christ, the pulsations of whose heart were ever Divine. I

* Dr. Thomas's concluding remarks in his exegetical and homiletical work on the Psalms, consisting of three volumes of the Homilistic Library.

asked him whether he had ever carefully read the history of David through, as given in *the Bible*, that Book whose every word *he* regarded as inspired. He did not say "No;" on the contrary, stated he had gone many times through the Bible. I asked him if he had gone through it on *this* question. On his giving no explicit affirmative reply, I requested him to do so, and pointed him to all those parts in Scripture referring in any way to David. He promised to read all. He called on me a week or two afterwards. Was he convinced? No, but his confidence was shaken. Not convinced, of course; one of that type would never be. You may as well endeavour to break stones by argument, or melt lead in ice, as to change the opinions of what is called a "stiffly orthodox man."

"Nothing's so perverse in nature
As a profound opinionater."—*Butler*.

In studying David as he actually appears in the SCRIPTURES, what do I read?—

I read how, in cold blood, he slew two hundred Philistines in order that he might obtain Michal, Saul's daughter, for his wife.*

I read how, in order to gratify Saul, a miserable tyrant, he fought with the Philistines, and slew them "with a great slaughter."†

I read how he allowed Michal to practise a cowardly imposture on Saul, her father, in order to preserve his life, and how, having escaped the danger himself, he left her to face the anger of her royal sire.‡

I read how he instructed Jonathan to deceive his father by a lie. "And David said, Behold to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even. If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family."§

I read how, when he fled to Nob, in search of Ahimelech the priest, he deceived the priest by an egregious falsehood, and by deceiving the priest he brought destruction on no less than eighty-five of them, as well as on a number of men, women, and children, and put forth no effort whatever for their deliverance.||

I read how, with a miserable cowardice, he feigned madness before Achish the king of Gath. "And he changed his behaviour," "feigned

* 1 Sam. xviii. 20-27.

§ 1 Sam. xx. 5 6.

† 1 Sam. xix. 5.

1 Sam. xxi. 1, 2; xxii. 17-30.

‡ 1 Sam. xix. 11-17.

himself mad," "scrabbled on the doors of the gate," "and let his spittle fall on his beard," so that the king said, "Have I need of madmen?"*

I read how, because Nabal refused to grant him the gift he required, he broke into a rage, armed himself and four hundred men in order to destroy him; and although afterwards he seems to have repented of this, it was the occasion of Nabal's death, which was doubtless brought on by terror.†

I read how, having in fear fled for his life to Gath, a city of the Philistines, he won the confidence of the generous king Achish, who gave him the city of Ziklag to dwell in, and support for his six hundred men, with their wives and families, for sixteen months; and how, notwithstanding all this generosity, he practised a foul dissimulation on the monarch; gave him to understand that he had resigned all connection with Judah, and had passed over to the side of the Philistines; and how, having invaded the Geshurites, the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, and smote the land, "he left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel," and gave such an account to Achish of this fiendish achievement that "Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him, therefore he shall be my servant for ever."‡

I read how, when the Amalekites, whom he had plundered, had by violence regained that of which they had been robbed, and set fire to Ziklag, he, in the fierceness of his displeasure, "smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day, and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men which rode upon camels and fled."§

I read how he invoked the curse of Abner's blood on Joab, saying, "Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread."||

I read how he gathered his people together and fought against Rabbah, and took the king's crown from off his head, and brought forth the spoil of the city, and put "the people therein under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln;" and did this in all the cities of the children of Ammon."¶

* 1 Sam. xxi. 11-15.

† 1 Sam. xxv. 2-38.

‡ 1 Sam. xxvii. 1-12

§ 1 Sam. xxx. 1-17.

|| 2 Sam. iii. 28, 29.

¶ 2 Sam. xii. 27-31.

I read how cruelly he acted towards Mephibosheth, the poor crippled son of Jonathan, his deceased friend. Credulously believing the slanders of Ziba, he stripped him of all his property, and left him in utter destitution, bestowing all upon the slanderer. *

I read how, that after having sworn to Saul, just before his death, that he would not destroy any of his children, he delivers seven of Saul's sons into the hands of the Gibeonites, "and they hanged them in the hill." †

I read how, under the Satanic influence of ambition, he caused a census of his subjects to be taken, and thus brought down the displeasure of Jehovah, for there died, from Dan to Beersheba, seventy thousand men. ‡

I read how, in the case of Uriah, he perpetrated one of the most enormous crimes that can be found in the long black roll of human infamy—a crime which involved a number of other crimes, crimes which outraged every principle of the Decalogue—violating the sanctity of marriage; tempting the husband, who had been one of the most valiant soldiers in his army, to drunkenness in order to conceal his adultery; commanding Joab to expose to the greatest danger the injured husband; and all this—the adultery, the drunkenness, the treachery, and the cold-blooded murder—committed by him as the king of the nation, who was bound to be an example to his people; a loud professor of religion, a hymn-maker and a hymn-singer; an old man, whose lusts should have been quenched long ago by holy thoughts and virtuous living. §

I read how he had numerous concubines and wives, and established a harem in Jerusalem—an atrocious example to Solomon, his son and regal successor, whom he hypocritically exhorted to "keep the charge of the Lord, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes and His commandments." ||

I read how, as a "very old man," "stricken in years," with a "young virgin in his bosom," he, with the spirit of revenge strong in him, commanded Solomon to inflict death upon two men, Joab and Shimei. In relation to Joab he says, "Let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." Concerning Shimei, to whom he had previously pledged protection, he says, "His hoar head bring down to the grave with blood." ¶

These are a few specimens of the crimes I find in the Biblical record of this man's life. "Time," says an eminent modern scholar, thinker, and author, "would fail to tell of David's crimes, his treacheries, his

* 2 Sam. xvi. 1-4.

† 2 Sam. xxiv. 1-16.

‡ 2 Sam. v. 13, and 1 Kings ii. 3.

§ 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22; 2 Sam. xxi. 1-9.

¶ 2 Sam. xi. 2-17.

¶ 1 Kings i. 2-4; 1 Kings ii. 5, 9.

murders, his adulteries, his grovellings in the very sty of sensuality. Murder is too mild a word. His butcheries of the Canaanites were so manifold that when he had killed them off—men, women, and little children—his hands were too red to build the Temple, and the work was deferred to Solomon's reign."

But are there no good deeds in this Biblical record that should be stated as a set-off against all these revolting enormities? But what mean you by good deeds? If you mean deeds in strict conformity with the spirit and letter of the Decalogue, as given by Moses, as interpreted by Christ, and as embodied in His life, then such deeds are sadly wanting in the record of David's life. In walking through his biography, a path stained with blood and foul with moral pollutions, I have looked on every hand for some fruit of goodness, on every spot for some flower of virtue, but I have been sadly disappointed. "By their fruits ye shall know them," said Christ. And what are the fruits in his life that will stand examination in the eyes of Him who is the Light of the world? The man has confessedly genius of a high order, but the wings of that genius are stained with human gore, and foul with moral mud.

My candid readers will pardon me, therefore, if I have not joined with the multitude of popular religionists and held David up as a pre-eminent saint. This I cannot do, because Christ is my Standard of moral character. He is the Light of the world, and in His light David, in all his royal pomp, appears to me morally contemptible, and with all the splendour of his genius as displayed in his psalm-making and psalm-singing, more meet for the nether regions than for "the inheritance of the saints in light." *

He is an example of a large class in whom the devotional sentiment is not only stronger than the ethical, but conquers and often crushes it. "Devotion," says *Sears*, "may be so exclusive and absorbing as to preclude all knowledge of ourselves. We may be so intent on praising God as to leave no room for thorough self-examination; and then we may fall into the delusion that God is so flattered with our exaltations of His excellences that He will not hold us to a very strict account, and we may live in ignorance of what we really are; and without this self-analysis, we may see faults in our neighbours, and even be indignant at what they do, when we practise the same thing ourselves, though with some change of circumstance and occasion. Worship, when genuine, has a twofold office; it draws us up into the Divine command and brings thence the light of the Divine justice, searching out all the hiding-places of the

* See Vol. ii. p. 432.

heart, thus revealing us true under the light of the Divine countenance. We can praise God, and admire His power and magnificence, and be-sing His glories, without any of this reflex influence that searches out our own sins and illumines all the pages of our book of life within. Such was David's state sometimes, amid all his psalms and hallelujahs. While in this state of mind Nathan comes to him with a message, and Nathan supposes a case. It is the parable of the rich man with many flocks and herds, who took the poor man's lamb, the only one he had, and killed it and dressed it for his table. David's indignation is greatly kindled at such meanness. He was going away, very likely, to write a psalm about it, and would probably have turned Nathan's touching parable into a splendid lyric for the Temple, to be set to music, and to chant the Divine judgment against oppression. 'But wait a moment,' says the prophet, and then he writes under the picture, 'David.' 'Yes, thou art the man, David, who hast perpetrated one of the greatest crimes on which the sun ever shone.'

We may rest assured that had the life of David been marked by any great virtues, such virtues would have been trumpeted through all the regions of his contemporaries and emblazoned in his biography for men of future times to honour and applaud, for he had thousands of hireling priests in his pay and under his command, as well as professional prophets and singers.* Has not the tendency of priests and conventional religionists ever been to chant the praises of their patrons? Nor would such state functionaries merely loudly laud the virtues of their royal chief, but would no doubt veil to the utmost his crimes, and endeavour to roll the black wave of oblivion over his abominations.

Am I to give Christ the "pre-eminence in all things," in all thoughts, sympathies, and aims? Then I cannot hold in admiration this hero of conventional sainthood. When He, the Supreme Judge of moral character said, "*All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers,*" † whom did He include? Did He exclude David?

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 1-6; xxv. 20-32.

† "The Sinaitic MS. and several of the early versions read this verse without the words translated "*before me,*" but the balance of authority is strongly in their favour; and the fact of their being hard to understand, or having been misunderstood, is the probable reason of their being omitted. Retaining them, as we seem bound to do, we are also bound to give them their ordinary temporal meaning. There can be but one rendering which suggests itself to the unbiassed mind, and that is the rendering of our version. The Greek words and the English words are equally plain, and other renderings are due to the exigencies of interpretation."—*Dr. Ellicott's Commentary.*

Another thing in connection with this work that will be deprecated by the many is—

(2.) *That I ascribe only a few of the psalms to David.* The unthinking regard the whole Psalter as the effusions of David's genius ; hence they accept it as the "*Treasury of David.*" But my inquiries into the matter have forced me to the conclusion that this is not so, that there are only a few which can with any probability be ascribed to the pen of Jesse's son. Of the whole book, comprising one hundred and fifty psalms, only seventy-three are even in the superscriptions assigned to David, whilst twenty-four are ascribed to David's singers, to Solomon, and to Moses, and fifty are anonymous.

But the superscriptions or titles are confessedly insufficient to determine the authorship. They have not been given by the authors themselves, but in all probability by the various compilers and collectors, of whom we know little or nothing. "In short," say some of the most learned modern expositors of this book, "the superscriptions of the Psalms are like the superscriptions to the Epistles of the New Testament. It seems to have been a custom of the Jews to give to a composite work the name of its most eminent author, and as David's name was pre-eminent amongst the Jews, the compiler of these Jewish hymns ascribed them to David. Indeed the name of David is used in other parts of Scripture, long after his death, to denote the head of the Davidic family." David's name is the most famous in the history of the Jewish people, and hence those of the Jews in our Saviour's time who received a high impression of Him called Him the "Son of David." "It is impossible to conceive that David could write in the fourteenth Psalm, 'When Jehovah turneth the captivity of His people, then shall Jacob rejoice,' or that at any period of his life he could have written the last two verses of the fifty-first Psalm ; or again, that when he fled from the court of Achish, he should have vented the feelings of his wild nomad life in an acrostic psalm."—*Four Friends.*

What matters the authorship of either or all ? What matters it whether, as some critics affirm, David wrote only fifteen out of the hundred and fifty, or wrote the whole ? What matters it through what channels, countries, or climates the river has rolled, if its waters are pure and vital ? Truth is not the less true or important because uttered by an uninspired man ; truth is truth, whether shrieked out by a fiend or chanted by a seraph. Prove to me that Lord Bacon wrote the plays we ascribe to Shakspeare—are the merits of those matchless productions depreciated or enhanced thereby ?

Nor does the question of the order in which they appear matter more to us than the authorship. In truth, they seem to have no order. The unknown compilers brought them together without regard to chronological sequence or progressive thought. To use the language of another, "The Psalter itself resembles rather such a volume as would be produced if several hymn-books were bound together, than one carefully ordered selection." In this way the great Father throughout the universe seems to teach His children; He does not give them truth in systems. If a man is to get botanical truth, he must cull the flowers for himself; astronomical truth, he must classify the heavenly bodies; geological truth, he must gather together the fossils from whatever part of the world they may be found. So in the Bible, there is no system there. In this we see both His wisdom and His kindness as a Teacher. It sets and keeps the mind a-thinking, leads it on into fresh fields of inquiry for ever.

Still another thing in connection with this work that will be deprecated by the many is—

(3) *The ignoring of supposed Messianic references.* That there are references to some one designated "Messiah" or "Anointed" cannot be denied. No less than ten times does the word occur in the book.* In some instances it applies to the Israelitish people, as in Psalm cv. 15; in other places, as in Psalm cxxxii., to Solomon. The Psalms supposed to apply to Christ are given in the "Supplement,"† and are examined in the previous pages of this work.

But wherein, I ask, is there a clear and an undoubted Messianic reference? Some might say, and indeed have said, it is in David himself, as a *type* of Christ. But if a *type*, in what sense?

In the sense of his *nature*? Christ was Divine, and are not all men *types* in this sense? Are not all men made in the "image of God"? Are not all men human, made of the same flesh and blood as Christ? "In all things it behoved Him to be made like to His brethren."

Or is it in the sense of his *office*? David was a king, so was Christ, but in an essentially different sense, in a sense in which we can find no resemblance. Christ reigns over those He has created, whether rational or not, holy or wicked—reigns not by written statutes, but by eternal principles—reigns by the absolute sovereignty of His Divine nature and matchless character. No human king could by any possibility be a *type* of Him who was the "Prince of the kings of the earth."

* Psalms ii. 2; xviii. 50; xx. 6; xxviii. 8; lxxxiv. 9; lxxxix. 38, 51; cv. 15; cxxxii. 10, 17.

† See Supplement F.

Or is it meant that he was a type of Christ in the *events of his earthly history*? Inasmuch as *all* men are of the same nature, possessing similar impulses, instincts, and faculties, and living and struggling under similar external influences; it would be difficult, perhaps, to find two men out of the millions who populate the globe, in whose history there are not events similar to those of each other. Cannot events be found in the lives of Cæsar, Alexander, Napoleon, similar to those in the life of David, and some even to events in the life of Christ Himself?

For these three reasons, therefore,—*the low estimate I have formed of David's moral character, the uncertainty as to the authorship of various Psalms, and the ignoring of supposed Messianic references*,—I anticipate the condemnation of my work by many in the so-called religious world. Though it is not pleasant for a man to have works on which he has expended his best faculties and attention denounced—especially if he be a man of social sympathies, deep and tender,—albeit if he have true manhood in him he will not dread it. Every man who has studied the Bible so as to get convictions for himself, and who has courage enough to proclaim his convictions, has always exposed himself to the arrogant howlings of the *odium theologicum*. Such howlings in these modern times roared in the ears of such men as Arnold, Maurice, Robertson, Lynch, Bushnell, and Kingsley, but they only served to beat their ideas deeper into the world's heart. No man need dread them now, but rather hail them. It may be, however, well for those who pronounce harsh judgments on the Biblical conclusions of others to ponder the appeal of the great Apostle of free religious thought, "Who art thou that judgest another?" Yes, who art thou? Hast thou special illumination? Hast thou the absolute Gospel, or is thy Gospel but a mere class of notions? Has Heaven made thee the arbiter of human thought? Thou art, it may be, a scholar, a philosopher, a saint—perhaps all combined; still thou art a fallible mortal, and thou hast neither the qualification nor authority to sit in judgment upon thy brother's convictions. I cannot forbear asking, Who are the men who have been the most ready to arrogate to themselves this power?—the most ready to arraign and punish their brethren for heterodoxy? Have they been distinguished either by great spirituality of soul, liberality of thought, or philosophic insight into the laws of mind, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the principles of God's administration? No, they have been men whose conceptions have been narrow, superficial, and material,—men whose Gospel has been a little bundle of crude notions, attractive to the thoughtless, but repulsive to all higher minds. What, then, have we to

do with our brother whose convictions we may suppose to be wrong? Do with him? Treat him with fraternal respect; seek to correct him by fair and affectionate argument and a holy life. Wise, just, and beautiful is the apostolic advice. Had it always been acted upon, acrimony in religious controversy, schisms in the body of Christ, martyrdom in the annals of the Church,—those hideous blots,—would never have appeared on the page of human history.

Having noticed that in the work which many will deprecate, I pass on to notice—

Secondly, *THAT WHICH SOME MAY APPROVE*. There are at least two features in this work that men, conscious of their own fallibility and unbiassed by traditional dogmas, will be likely I think to look on with a friendly rather than an unfavourable eye.

(1) *Independency*. Although, as will be seen, I have consulted the highest philological and critical authorities on the Psalms, and derived much light and guidance therefrom, I am not conscious of having been servilely swayed in my conclusions by any. They have not been my lenses but my lamps. I have not looked at subjects through their eyes, but have brought on them the rays which their learning and genius have reflected. Though the conclusions of an independent inquirer may be anticipated by some, and deemed illogical and unscholarly by others, they have still the merit of living. They are not hoary platitudes added to the huge lumber of rotting theologies; they have *vitality*. They are somewhat fresh, never having appeared in exactly the same form and in the same hues before, and “a living dog is better than a dead lion.” Feeble saplings, just struggling into life, are better than old cedars rotting at the roots. But independent conclusions have not merely the merit of living, but the merit of *suggestiveness*. Because Christ’s thoughts were independent they were charged with a suggestive force, mighty and inexhaustible. True, He was infinitely more independent than the most original of human thinkers, and hence no thoughts have ever exerted such an influence on the mind of the world as His. There was more religious *thinking*, perhaps, in Judea during the three years of His ministry than had been for centuries before. He put the wheels of religious thought, which had been all but motionless for ages, into a rapid movement, whose accelerative revolutions have continued ever since, and which has borne humanity on to its present advanced state of civilisation, knowledge, and morality. His thoughts, like the breath of spring, swept over the mental world and quickened its dormant germs into life. This suggestive teaching is the

highest kind of teaching,—the only teaching of any worth. He who crams the minds of others with his own ideas, however correct, does nothing to help humanity equal to him who stimulates the mind to create ideas for itself,—to think. Jesus knew this, and His aim was to get men to think.

So far, then, as the ideas running through this work of mine are the honest convictions of my own personal inquiries, they will, I doubt not, meet with more or less acceptance by those—few though they be—who are not fettered by systems or rooted in sects.

Another feature of this work is—

(2) *Practicalness.* I have not written on the “collations of MSS.,” of “various readings of the Vulgate,” of “Coptic and Syriac versions,” of “interpolations,” of “the original languages,” of “Hebrew points,” &c. Nor have I written on speculative theologies, in which I confess I feel but little interest. I have not written to propound new theories or to support old ones, to charm the imagination with fine composition and pictorial illustrations, to titillate the religious susceptibilities of the unthinking with sensational metaphors and exciting anecdotes. Gorgeous language in religious thought is like the painted window, which, while it may transmit the light of day, variegated and tinged with a thousand hues, diverts the attention from its proper place to the pomp and splendour of the artist’s hand. My aim throughout has been to bring out, from the grand old poems that make up this book, the thoughts that are divine and true to man as man, the world over and the ages through. More and more am I convinced that the mere ideas of men, however learned, can do but little to improve the moral condition of mankind. God’s ideas alone can quicken and renovate, ennoble and beautify, the human soul. St. Chrysostom describes true preaching as that wherein “God speaks much and man little.” God’s ideas are the seed out of which must come, in the garden of souls, all that is true in life, beautiful in form, and sustaining in fruit. What John Wesley said a hundred years ago, not only shows the sublime practicalness of his aim in the grand mission he inaugurated, but urgently demands the attention of all preachers who would really improve the world. “I find,” he says, “more profit in sermons on either good tempers or good works than in what are vulgarly called Gospel sermons. That term has now become a mere cant word; I wish none of our Society would use it. It has no determinate meaning. Let but a pert, self-sufficient animal, that has neither sense nor grace, bawl out something about Christ, or His blood, or justification by faith, and his hearers

cry out, 'What a fine Gospel sermon!' Surely Methodists have not so earned Christ. We know no Gospel without salvation from sin."

It is because not only those who are called by his illustrious name, but other sects also, have to a great extent neglected this, that the pulpit has been filling men's brains with theories about the Trinity, the Atonement, Justification, Election, the Future State, Heaven and Hell, &c., and left the souls of men without any practical conviction concerning the rights of man as man, the mutual claims of the rulers and the ruled, the employers and the *employés*, the rich and the poor; concerning the elements of true moral greatness, the anti-Christianity of all wars, and the innumerable practical evils that are cursing the race.

For these reasons, then, I hope my humble work may win the approval of some of my contemporaries, and subserve to some degree the higher interests of mankind.

N.B.—*He who would form a just judgment of David must study the BIBLE account of him—the ONLY TRUE account—in 1 Sam. xvi. to xxxi.; 2 Sam. i. to xxiv.; 1 Kings i. and ii., and 1 Chron. xi. to xxix. He must go to these verses, and nowhere else.*

THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER.—"Our four Gospels have given us a type of perfection such as the world has never before, or since, seen equalled. This high ideal is found not as one of those bold generalisations, which are the fugitive and brilliant dreams of the spirit, but in the perfectly simple form of a human life unfolded before our eyes . . . The humble village in which He was brought up, is known to all. He lived the common life of the lower classes of His people: He was despised because He sat at meat with publicans. He sought no distinction by extravagant mortification, nor did He make any appeal, like Mahomet, to the warlike passions. He bequeathed to His disciples, not the scimitar and its conquests, but the cross and its reproach. In the conditions of every-day life was displayed that moral perfection which is without a parallel, because it united all the qualities elsewhere found apart."

E. DE PRESSESEE, D.D.

Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

THE TREASURES OF THE SNOW.

"HAST THOU ENTERED INTO THE TREASURES OF THE SNOW?"—*Job*.

"HAST thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" the Almighty is made to ask impatient Job. And Job himself uses the term three times, always, however, in the sense of melting or melted snow, as if the man had not come into actual contact with it, but had seen it, as I saw it, melting and pouring from the mountains in Switzerland under the August sun. In the Psalms there is an exquisite hint of a snow-fall through the perfect stillness, and a magnificent storm piece into which the snow comes with other elements. In the Proverbs, again, there is a passage, how that there is nothing new under the sun, in the matter of ice-cold drinks in summer, where the writer says, "As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so a faithful servant refreshes the soul of his master"; from which we may also infer that even Solomon, in all his glory, had trouble with his servants. Isaiah had a noble image of the truth falling softly and fruitening the heart, as the snow falls and fruitens the earth. There is not a word about the snow from the lips of the Saviour; and it is only noticed at all in the New Testament in a secondary sense,—used as a comparison, never as an experience. . . . When John Foster learned that snow had been detected on the poles of Mars, he argued that the presence of the snow meant cold; cold, suffering; suffering, sin; and sin on another planet, a frightful extension of the curse and fall. . . . It was the man's misfortune that, otherwise so great and good, he could permit his soul to be bolted fast

in a prison so dark that the very stars in heaven were no better to him than a great penitentiary and grave-yard. . . . The flakes call to us for ever through the moan and shriek of the storm, or whisper as they fall in silence and rest on the land like wool, "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? and tell us how the revelation of the microscope chords with the words of the Master about the robing of a lily; that down to the minutest and most common thing the hand of their Maker and our Father reaches as perfectly as up to the most celestial and divine. It is disorder to us; it is order to Him. He directs the storm. Snow and hail, fire and vapour, and stormy wind fulfil His word. Not a sparrow or a snow-flake falleth to the ground without the will of your Father. I ask the star, as it melts on my hand, "What proof can you give me that you are not born of the mere spume of the tempest?" It looks at me from beneath its six-rayed crown and answers, "I am no more than the Atlantic. I come out of order and light, a child of the day." . . . The snow is, in its measure, *the power of God* unto salvation. It is not an aggravation of winter, but a defence against it. Philosophy blends with Science to tell of its grace and goodness. . . . God sends in the snow-flakes *a guardian angel* for every grass-blade and flower seed He will keep from the frost, to protect them from frost; then to sink into their hearts and rise with them in the morning of their resurrection. If God so shape the snow-stars, can He fail finally to shape the soul? And if He giveth snow like wool to keep the shivering seed; if He so clothe the land as well as the lily,—will He leave me naked? . . . We speak of the snow as an *image of death*. It may be that; but it hides the everlasting life always under its robe,—the life to be revealed in due time, when all cold shadows shall melt away before the ascending sun, and we shall be, not unclothed but clothed upon, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

From "*Nature and Life*,"—DR. COLLYER.

T. B. K.

"Every malignant creature, like every perverted intelligence, is a sphinx. A terrible sphinx propounding a terrible riddle; the riddle of the existence of evil."—VICTOR HUGO.

Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”
—*Carlyle*.

TIME, FLIGHT OF.—“My weeks and months are hardly distinguished in memory other than as a *running-web* out of the loom ; a bright stripe for a day, a dark stripe for a night, and when it goes faster, even these run together into endless gray.”—*Carlyle*.

LIFE, PRECOCIOUS.—“There is a set of men who begin to *live at full gallop* while yet they are boys. As a general rule, they are originally of a sickly frame which can scarcely trot, much less gallop without the spur of stimulants.”—*Lytton*.

DEATH, A PROMOTION.—“What is death ? A change of situation—an enlargement of liberty—a privilege—a blessing—an apotheosis.”—*Landor*.

ETERNITY AND TIME.—“When I go out of doors in the summer night, and see how high the stars are, I am persuaded there is time enough here or somewhere for all that I must do ; and the good-world manifests very little impatience.”—*Emerson*.

ETERNITY, WORKING FOR.—“I was perfectly aware that I was *planting acorns* while my contemporaries were setting kidney beans ; the oak will grow, though I may never sit under its shade, my children may.”—*Southey*.

THE FUTURE, FAITH IN.—

“Faith over-leaps the confines of our reason,
And if by faith, as in old times was said,
Women received their dead
Raised up to life, then only for a season
Our partings are, nor shall we wait in vain
Until we meet again.”—*Longfellow*.

HEAVEN AND DEVELOPMENT.—“Be assured there will be no such imperfect and incomplete beings in Heaven as infants in intellect and in sense for ever. All will be perfect and complete according to the plan of God, who made us for fellowship with Himself and with all His blissful family.”—*Dr. Macleod*.

MAN—A PESSIMIST VIEW OF HIM. “What is man ? A foolish baby ; vainly strives, and fights, and frets ; demanding all, deserving nothing. One small grave is what he gets.”—*Carlyle*.

Reviews.

STRAY PEARLS. By CHARLOTTE M. YONGE. In two Volumes. London: Macmillan and Co.

These are Memoirs of Margaret de Ribaumont, Viscountess of Bellaises. The talented authoress tells us that the "state of French society, and the strange scenes of the Fronde, beguiled her into this tale," which is a historic romance written in the form of an Autobiography. The *Fronde*, as our readers will know, was the name given to a political faction in France, during the minority of Louis XIV., and which was hostile to the court and the prime minister, Mazain, and caused great domestic troubles from the year 1648 to 1654. Both the incidents—which are numerous and striking—and the free colloquial style, give to these volumes an interest which will secure for them, no doubt, a large circulation. The work is full of high life and political adventure.

SUNRISE ON THE SOUL; OR THE PATH FOR THE PERPLEXED. By Rev. OGMORE DAVIES, of Craven Chapel, London. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 27, Paternoster Row.

Here are twenty pulpit discourses, the subjects of which are,—“Jesus and the Fishermen—Jesus and imperfect Faith—Jesus and Humanness—Jesus and Thoughtlessness and Thought—Jesus and the Possessed—Jesus and Man’s deepest Sadness—Jesus Touched by the Way—Jesus Seeing the People—Jesus Giving His Power to His Followers—Jesus Comforting and Warning—Jesus and His Doubters—Jesus and Hidden Things—Jesus and His Rest—Jesus and the Two Ideals—Jesus to be Trusted—Jesus and His Brethren—Jesus and His Teaching—Jesus and His Bounty—Jesus on the Mountain and on the Sea—Jesus the Christ.”

JESUS, what a name! what a grand intellectual and moral Personality! near to our nature but remote from our character, “separate from sinners.” How, even in pulpits, popular sermons, and religious tractates, is it vulgarly defamed and hideously mal-represented. Conventional religion trades in this great Name! The volume in our hands is a refreshing exception to the popular discourses on “Jesus.” There are here no rhapsodic whinings, no hoary platitudes, no ranting rhodomontade, no histrionic hootings, no match lightning or stage thunder, none in fact of those elements which charlatanic pulpiteers employ to attract the vulgar crowd, and thus enrich their coffers, and gratify at once their vanity and greed. The thoughts here seem naturally to flow from the fathomless font of

redemptive truth ; and the flow of thought is deep, clear, refreshing, and calm, with here and there, the stirring rattle of a ripple, and the gust of a quickening breeze. Should such sermons as these fill the large Chapel in which the talented author ministers, our hopes for the London pulpit (which for the last ten years have been at zero) would revive. Having been tolerably acquainted with the Metropolitan pulpit for the last forty years our impression is, that in natural ability, in soul-inspiring eloquence, it has for the last quarter of a century been losing power to attract the thinking amongst the population, and to emancipate souls from the thralldom of wealth and fashion, sensual pleasures, and materialistic despotisms.

THE GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL FOR 1883. Vol. IV.

THE BOY'S OWN ANNUAL FOR 1883. Vol. V. London : The Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row.

Here are two, in every sense, most handsome volumes. Both abound with anecdotes, tales, facts, music, useful hints of every description, medical and culinary, and valuable receipts. There are illustrations on subjects of endless variety, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational.

The Girl's Annual has special articles on needle-work, botany, cookery, painting, music, singing, health ; and countless other subjects of great interest and usefulness to "girls."

The Boy's Annual is more full of the adventurous, the mechanical, the sporting, and the scientific. As several volumes of these magazines have appeared from year to year, the character of the works is too well known to require description, and their merits too well recognised to justify recommendation. Parents, whose endeavour it should be not only to interest but to improve the minds of their children, could not do better than to procure these works.

CHATTERBOX, FOR 1883. Edited by ERSKINE CLARKE, M.A.

THE PRIZE, FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, 1883. London : Wells, Gardener, Darton and Co., 2, Paternoster Buildings.

Although a number of imitations of these Annuals have sprung up, and are pushed by enterprising publishers, these still maintain their pre-eminence ; and we trust the extent of their republic. *Chatterbox* seems as full of interest as ever. The literature is not only suited to interest children but is pure and healthy. The illustrations, which are on almost every page, are striking and life-like. The excellent Editor cannot be surprised at the "number of rivals and unprincipled imitators that have sprung up," of which he complains. On all hands there are intellectual

apes whose instinct is mimicry. The *Homilist* has not a few of these "unprincipled imitators," and worse its appropriators, those who copy into their own pages our materials and our methods. But the genuine, after all, lives.

THE QUIVER, FOR 1883; an Illustrated Magazine. London: Cassell and Co., Ludgate Hill.

Here is the 18th Annual Volume of this Work, conducted on the same principles, and in the same style, as usual. There are numerous Tales, some of which—such as *Barbara Street*—are far above the average of such productions. It has also many pieces of Poetry, Anecdotes in abundance, Biographical Sketches. Some of the Bible discourses are remarkably good; all, perhaps, up to the average of such productions. The Pictorial Illustrations are numerous, and counsels are given of almost every description for daily life. The whole has a tendency that makes for honesty, truth, and religion.

HEROES OF LITERATURE: ENGLISH POETS. A Book for Young Readers. By JOHN DENNIS. London: S. P. C. K., Charing Cross.

Perhaps we cannot give a better idea of this book than the Author has presented in his preface. "In asking the reader to travel with me for a season in the 'realms of gold,' or rather in that English realm which is the richest, the widest, and the most fertile, I do not undertake fully to explore the country. So vast a journey is far beyond my power as a traveller. How, indeed, would it be possible to explore a territory so spacious, and to point out every lovely object in this enchanting region? The amplest leisure and the largest knowledge will scarcely suffice for such a task. My purpose is a more modest one—namely, to point out some of the impressive features of a road rich in all that is fitted to gladden the eye and soothe the heart. In other words, and dropping Keats' metaphor, the attempt is made in these pages to give such biographies of illustrious English Poets, and such a sketch of their works as may attract young readers to a study, the delight in which must grow in proportion to the knowledge." The Author gives a brief biographic sketch of the poets of the *Elizabethan* age, where we have Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe, Shakspeare, Ben Johnson, Vaughan, &c. Poets of the *Commonwealth and Restoration*—where we have Cowley, Milton, Marvell, Dryden. Poets of the *Georgian* age—where we have Pope, Samuel Johnson, Gray, Cowper, Burns, &c. Poets of the *Nineteenth* century—where we have Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Landor, Byron, Keats, Shelley, E. B. Browning, &c., &c.

The Author writes with a thorough consciousness that he knows what a Poet ought to be, all his faculties and inspirations, and he pronounces his judgment oracularly, and with but little hesitation. The book is a deeply interesting one, written by a man of high intelligence, critical acumen, and literary skill and strength.

THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE. A New Translation.

THE SPIRITUAL COMBAT, TOGETHER WITH THE PATH OF PARADISE.
Translated from the Italian of Lorenzo Scupoli.

THE SOLILOQUY OF THE SOUL. By THOMAS A'KEMPIS. London: Suttaby and Co., Amen Corner, St. Paul's.

Here are three little pocket volumes most elegantly "got up." They contain thoughts that were proclaimed centuries ago, and that have been studied and valued by the most meditative and devout men of subsequent times.

Augustine's Confessions have the charm of priceless meditations in an Autobiographic form. This edition is a new translation, in which the meaning of the Author is made clear in the fewest words.

The Spiritual Combat. Of this work the translator says,—“The earnestness of the religious revival in the South of Europe, in the 16th Century, which was commenced soon after the great schism in the Church, is well illustrated by this marvellous work of Lorenzo Scupoli, a Theatine Clerk Regular.” He belonged to a religious order, founded in 1524, the object of which was similar to that of John Wesley's work, to revive the religion of Christ and to supply the deficiency of the parochial clergy. As a preacher he possessed matchless force and enthusiasm, and made numerous converts; his name, as a preacher, extended to all the large towns in Italy. Calumny, it would seem, drove him into obscurity during the last twenty-five years of his life. The result of the seclusion is this beautiful little work, in which the Christian life is presented (not as Bunyan presented it, as a “Pilgrim's Progress”) as a “Spiritual Combat.”

The Soliloquy of the Soul. Thomas A'Kempis' Work “The Imitation of Christ,” is known throughout the reading world. Next to the Bible it has no equal in the extent of its circulation. In it is gathered and concentrated all that is elevated and profoundly pious in all the old ascetics. The work before us—though not so well known—is in some respects equal to it in merit. If it has not so many brief, quivering sentences, there are stirring utterances, indicating the utter abandonment of the soul to God. The Publisher merits the thanks of all the spiritually-thoughtful in issuing these three exquisite little volumes.

MOTHER'S KNEE. By M. J. TILSLEY.

"SO HAPPY."

"BUCKETS AND SPADES." By ROBERT EDWARD CAMPBELL. London: Dean and Co., 160, Fleet Street.

Here are three of the most charming books for boys and girls that have ever come under our notice. The paper is exquisite; the printing perfect; the Sketches, which are numerous, and coloured, are most artistic and striking. Here are animals of all descriptions, boys and girls in every playful attitude; trees and flowers of vast variety; and music and songs suited to the little ones. No child could ever receive a more fascinating, beautiful, and in every way charming present than these three volumes.

THE GOLDEN FLORAL SERIES.—"NEARER MY GOD TO THEE," "THE BREAKING WAVES DASHED HIGH." London: J. Walker and Co., Paternoster Row.

These cards form part of one of an exquisite series. No work within our knowledge has ever been issued at once in a style so useful and elegant as these Christmas, and New Year, and Birthday gifts. In one of these little books we have printed in most elegant type and style, the hymn of Mrs. Hemans, "*The breaking waves dashed high*," and with every verse there is a striking and beautiful illustration. The other contains the celebrated hymn of Sarah Flower Adams, "*Nearer my God to Thee*." Here also is a picture to every verse, and the illustrations are of the highest artistic order. We await with interest the other books in this most attractive and beautiful series.

A HOMILETIC COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS. (No. 2.) By Revs. W. H. JELLIE, and F. W. BROWN. London: R. D. Dickenson, Farringdon Street.

The second part of this carefully executed Commentary justifies the estimate we recorded in noticing the first number. Without tautology we could not repeat our good opinion of it. But we may describe the work as giving, in the first place, Suggestive Readings on each chapter or passage, then Sectional Homilies, then Outlines on Verses, which are followed with Illustrative Addenda. Confessedly and rightly, the work is largely indebted to compilations which are wisely selected, usually from choice sources. But the original writing is not unworthy of its place amid more classic passages. Especially are our own frequent contributor's (the Rev. F. W. Brown) homiletics, terse, forceful, and fresh. The spirit of the strange ceremonies is eagerly sought by him, and, generally, strongly grasped, and practically applied in its widest bearings.



The
Leading Homily.

LESSONS FROM THE SNOW.

“HAST THOU ENTERED INTO THE TREASURES OF THE SNOW.”—
Job xxxviii. 22.

WHAT hint of the Divine blessing is revealed to God's children in the fair robe of winter's snow? So far from any thought of goodness being discovered in this yearly visitant it has been argued that the presence of the snow means cold; cold, suffering; suffering, sin; and sin, punishment. How this theory clashes with what Coleridge said:—"In nature there is nothing melancholy." And surely the philosopher was right, for is not nature very beautiful at all seasons of the year? We may, of course, if we choose so to do, get sorrowful lessons from any period of the year. As we see the snow falling in large flakes, covering the earth with a white vesture, and watch some poor half-clad creature shivering out in the cold, we may shudder and say—"God help the poor," whilst we creep back to our snug nests by the fireside. That, however is no argument in proof of God's handiwork being adapted to make man miserable. Can we not say that the wintry robe of snow was the delight of our youth, as it is the touching image of the white age before the opening of a new spring? I read a story once of what happened just before in one of the new English colonies. It was a land where snow rarely fell. The children had grown up to their teens without once seeing it. One day, the thick flakes

began to fall; the children were terrified; they shrank back from it—did not know what to make of it; but the parents ran out to welcome what it was the first impulse of the children to fear. The unknown wonder of the one was the welcome visitor of the other, bringing hosts of kindly memories. As men and women saw the feathery fleece falling for the first time in their new home on the other side of the world, it seemed to bring the blessing of the old home on its wings, to make their past and present more intimately one. It was a means of grace to them: it came down cold out of the heavens; but their hearts became aglow as it touched them.

Another incident occurs to me; it is of one who had a friend who went south, out of the reach of snow, lived there many years, and then came north again. When the first snow fell after her return, she ran out to meet it with the delight of a child, caught a flake in her hand, and kissed it. A flake in her hand to kiss,—she could not resist the impulse. It was an old friend she had nearly forgotten, as welcome as the flowers in May. To her the snow was an emblem of delight. As we, too, see the faces of our friends on a frosty morning, when the ground is hard and crisp, as with skates in hand they wend their way to the nearest ice, are we not reminded that the snow is an emblem of delight? Or as, again, we see a snug party attired in their skin coats, gliding along in a sleigh on a bright winter's morning, are we not assured that the snow is an emblem of delight? The only instance of an actual snow-fall in the Bible, is recorded in 2 Samuel, where, speaking of a mighty man, the chronicler says he slew a lion in the midst of a pit, in the time of snow. In the poetry of the Old Testament, the references to the snow are far more thickly strewn than in the histories, surely showing how the presence of the white glory melted into the souls of those most open to all the influences of heaven, summer and winter alike. "In the Psalms," one reminds us, "there is an exquisite hint of a snow-fall through the perfect stillness, and a magnificent storm-piece into which the snow comes with other elements. In the Proverbs, again, there is a passage, how that there is nothing new under the sun, in the matter of ice-cold

drinks in summer, where the writer says, 'As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so a faithful servant refreshes the soul of his master,' from which we may also infer that even Solomon, in all his glory, had trouble with his servants. Isaiah has a noble image of the truth falling softly and fruitening the heart, as the snow falls and fruitens the earth. There is not a word about the snow from the lips of the Saviour, and it is only noticed at all in the New Testament in a secondary sense, used as a comparison, never as an experience." "But to men that dwell, as we do, where the snow is our constant companion through a long winter, there is both opportunity and necessity to enter more deeply into its meaning than any men have ever done who have only seen it at second-hand, crowning Hermon with its radiance, and lying white in the ravines of Lebanon. We can see, if we will, how there is that in it which at once illustrates the law, supplements the Gospel, and reveals the Almighty as intimately and wonderfully present in the snows of winter as in the blossoms of spring, or the greenery of summer, or the gold of the autumn of the year." Indeed, on a fine winter's day, may not great enjoyment be found in a good bracing country walk, which will send a summer glow through the system, and cause us to forget the cold? Does not the sky appear of a more brilliant blue, and look as if higher up than at any other season, while the winter moon, often seen at noon-day, appears to have gone far away beyond her usual altitude? Do not we see a new beauty in the trees which we beheld not before—the wonderful ramification of the branches as they cross and interlace each other, patterns fit for lace, nature's rich network—scallop and leaf, that seem as if worked on the sky to which we look up? Do we not indeed marvel that some of our pattern drawers have not made copies of these graceful intersections of spray and bough as seen amid the nakedness of winter? Sometimes the branches are hung with frost, which, were it not of so pure a white, we might fancy was some new kind of beautiful shaggy moss, in form like what is often seen on trees. The bushes, sedge, and withered grasses are covered with it, and look at times as if they were ornaments cut out of the purest marble; while some portions of the hedges, where only parts of the

branches are seen, look like the blackthorn, which is sheeted with milk-white blossoms long before a green leaf appears. Indeed our snow-covered earth is a grand sight; and, although the snow may hide much misery, and perchance cause some, in itself it is the bringer of joy. For, if we are healthy and strong, it sends gladness through our veins, and if we know of distress and wretchedness, surely the very life-giving power of the snow should make us mindful of others not so circumstanced as ourselves, and create and foster an impulse within us to do them good. The snow, then, is the bringer of joy; an emblem of *delight*.

The snow is also an emblem of *preservation*.

Snow, in northern countries, is an especial blessing of providence; for, by covering the earth, it prevents vegetation from being destroyed by the intense cold of the air in the winter months, and especially preserves it from cold piercing winds. Indeed it is a well-ascertained fact that snow affords a comparatively warm garment in intensely cold weather. This is based on the circumstance that snow, on account of its loose, flocculent nature, conducts heat slowly; accordingly, under this covering, even as under a thick woollen garment, the natural heat of the body is not dissipated rapidly, but retained.

Instances are plentiful to show that snow really protects substances from cold of great intensity. Both farmers and gardeners know this full well, and, consequently, value a good fall of snow on their fields and gardens in winter. Such surely know what that verse in the Psalms means:—"He giveth snow like wool."

There are not the same tests to apply in reference to the human body; nevertheless, the fact is equally undeniable. In my readings I have found many curious records of persons buried under the snow, surviving through long periods of time. In the year 1858 a woman had a remarkable experience of the value of a snow garment. She was overtaken by a storm on the moors, and was gradually snowed up, being unable to move either forward or backward. Thus she remained forty-three hours. Cold, as she of course was, the snow, nevertheless, prevented the cold from assuming a benumbing tendency; and she was able to the last to keep a breathing place about her head. On the second

day after, a man crossing the moor saw a woman's bonnet on the snow; he soon found that there was a living woman beneath the bonnet; and a course of judicious treatment restored her to health. A still more remarkable case is recorded of a woman at the end of last century. She was for eight long days and nights covered by the snow. She had strength enough to thrust a twig, with her handkerchief at the top of it through the snow, to serve as a signal and to admit a little daylight, she also came out from her fair shroud alive.

A few years ago a company of soldiers slept out all night in the snow; one, who looked along the line where he knew they must be the next morning, records how that all he could see was a row of white mounds, out of which they rose presently, shaking the snow from their blankets, and resuming order of battle. Are these not true words?—"The snow is, in its measure, the power of God unto salvation. It is not an aggravation of winter, but a defence against it. Philosophy blends with science to tell of its grace and goodness. We talk to our children of the good fairies, in which, alas, for them, they believe no more than we do. We might do better, if we told them the truth about such a thing as the snow, how God sends in the snow-flakes a guardian angel for every grass-blade and flower-seed He will keep from the frost, to protect them first, and then to sink into their hearts, and rise with them in the morning of their resurrection. And then I would try to see what I taught,—the goodness of God in a snowstorm. It is something to see, for one hour, a snow-driven city, to admire how all the vileness is hidden for a few minutes out of sight, though there were no use, except that, in it; but, in the country, the snow casting its white robe of protection over the land—gathering it as a hen gathereth her chickens under wings—that is a sight which leads us again toward the heaven out of which the wonder comes. And so I would touch these snow-flakes less for what they prove than for what they are,—the testimony of a snow-drift to the Sermon on the Mount; the extension of Christ's great argument out of summer into winter. If God so shape the snow-star, can He fail finally to shape the soul? And if He giveth snow like wool to

keep the shivering seed, if He so clothe the land as well as the lily,—will He leave me naked ? ”

The snow is an emblem of *fertility*.

One old commentator has said that it is not a fact that snow possesses in itself any fertilizing quality, such as nitrous salts, according to vulgar opinion; its whole use is covering the vegetables from intense cold, and thus preventing the natural heat of the earth from escaping, so that the intense cold cannot freeze the juices in the tender tubes, and so destroy the plant. Whether or not the old divine is correct as to the vegetable world does not concern me now: and so I reiterate my point, the snow is an emblem of fertility. This at least is true of human folk. Says *Prescott*:—“I think better of snow-storms since I find that though they keep a man’s body indoors, they bring his mind out.” It has been said by another, that while the land is more fruitful as you approach the tropics, what is taken out of the land is put into the man as you touch the snow. “In Iceland,” I am reminded, “where they are shut out from the rest of the world through the greater part of the year, and—

‘ The housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm,’

there has been a separate, and in its way, quite a noble scholarship to which we owe the preservation of some of the most precious signs, fragments of the earliest history of our own race.”

One has contended that if we draw a line from Edinburgh southward, until it touches half-way in the measured distance of England and Scotland together, and then count the names in each half for a long time backward, we shall see that, though London and the Universities are to the south of the line, the preponderance of genius and power is to the north. In America, it has been said, whatever can live in our literature so far has been written in the north. The great ballads, too, whose influence for good was incalculable, came from the city that is set farthest in the snow. Hence, there is a better blessing in the snow than the contemplation of its starry order and noble uses as it lies on the land. “What every man and woman feels, when, after the

disheartening rains of the last weeks in the autumn, the first powder of the white blessing falls; and then, as winter deepens, the snow comes in good earnest, and—

‘The whited air

Hides hills and woods, the river and the heaven,’

that is the intimation of the difference between the snow present in, and absent from our life.”

When the friends of the southern hemisphere remind those of the northern that roses are in bloom, whilst the latter are battling with the snow, may not those of the northern hemisphere retort, we *shall* have the roses by-and-bye, and we *have* the snow? Surely the man whose lot is cast where the roses bloom out-doors in January, might well exchange his roses for the final blessing that comes hidden in the snow.

“When on the edge of a wild winter night, the snow begins to come down thick and fast, darkening the heavens, covering the earth, muffling all sounds, foiling all sights; when the children rush home from school, and the father from business, and the shutters are fastened, and the curtains are drawn, and the supper is done, and the clear, open wood, or soft-coal, fire is made up—for one or the other of these I consider entirely indispensable to a night study of the treasures of the snow—and all sit in the sweet light together, and try to remember one sick, or poor, for whom they have not done what they could, but are utterly unable; and the books are brought out, and the work, which, to be seasonable at such a time, should be just as good as play; and there is cheerful chat among the elders of far-away times, and prophecy among the youth of what shall be, to be fulfilled as God will, and as they will; while still the snow falls and beats about the house, and hisses down into the fire; and the heart grows tender in its thankfulness, reaching out into the very wilderness, and crying, with Burns—

‘Ilk hopping bird, wee, helpless thing,

That, in the merry months o’ spring,

Delighted us to hear thee sing,—

What comes o’ thee?

Whaur wilt thou cower thy chattering wing,

And close thy ee?’

these, friends, are some of the treasures of the snow, as they lie most obviously open to our reverent study, inestimable, in their way, as the blossoms of the spring, the flowers of the summer, and the fruit of the autumn of the year."

The snow is an emblem of *immortality*.

Although we speak of the snow as an image of death, does it not hide the everlasting life under its robe? Even so. It hides the life to be revealed in due time, when all cold shadows shall melt away before the ascending sun, and we shall be, not unclothed, but clothed upon, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life. "How gloomy," says Johnson, "would be the mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he should never die; that what now thinks shall think on for ever." Be this, then, one lesson from the snow-flakes, as at this season of the year they cover the earth. One blessing, nay, *the* blessing revealed to God's children in the beautiful snow. Is not the very whiteness of the snow emblematic of the purity with which God clothes His children? Can He not make everyone of us "whiter than snow"? If then, as yet, you have not entered into the "treasures of the snow," and have not assured yourselves of the inscrutableness of God's ways, nor yet of the wisdom and goodness of all His doings, be this your theme now that Christmas-time is upon you; and as your thoughts revert to the birth of our Saviour do not let them overlook His death, but rather let your prayer and mine be,—

"Create in me a clean heart, O, God,
And renew a right spirit within me."

"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

"Helpless and foul as the trampled snow.
Sinner, despair not! Christ stoopeth low
To rescue the soul that is lost in sin,
And raise it to life and enjoyment again.
Groaning, bleeding, dying for thee,
The Crucified hung on the cursèd tree!
His accents of pity fall soft on thine ear,
Is there mercy for me? Will He heed my weak prayer?
O God! in the stream that for sinners did flow,
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow!"

DARLINGTON.

FREDERICK A. CHARLES.

Germ of Thought.

The Gospel Dawn and Christian Duty.

“KNOWING THE TIME (SEASON), THAT NOW IT IS HIGH TIME FOR YOU TO AWAKE OUT OF SLEEP: FOR NOW IS OUR SALVATION NEARER THAN WHEN WE BELIEVED. THE NIGHT IS FAR SPENT, AND THE DAY IS AT HAND: LET US THEREFORE CAST OFF THE WORKS OF DARKNESS, AND LET US PUT ON THE ARMOUR OF LIGHT,” &c.—*Romans* xiii. 11-14.

ST. PAUL had been spending some three months at Corinth, and was about to take, from the churches at Cenchrea and Corinth, the alms, which they had collected for the poor saints at Jerusalem, when he heard that some difficulties had arisen among the few Christian converts in the great city, Rome. Some were Jews and some were Gentiles; each having different views as to the requirements of a religious life, whilst their knowledge of Christianity was by no means an enlarged knowledge. The apostle, with a soul of love wide as humanity itself, longed to be the bearer of Gospel truth to Rome also. For as yet no apostle had visited them.

Rome was then what London is now—the greatest city in the world. Its grand palaces, temples, monuments, and theatres, rose proudly on every side. But profligacy and vice, obscenity and corruption, had sunk the city into the dismal depths of moral gloom; and, to crown all, the cruel and dissolute Nero was the Emperor.

Like a star in the blackness of night was this little church amid the benighted thousands of that vast city. It was to this little company that St. Paul wrote this wonderful Epistle. The apostles had gone forth to preach the Gospel everywhere. St. Paul had laboured and lived to see Christian communities established in Asia and in Europe. He knew both the power

and the prospects of Christianity. With the eyes of a Seer he discerns the future; and with the voice of a prophet he tells that small body of adherents to the new Faith that even now the moral darkness is passing away, and already there are signs of the dawning of a glorious day. The apostle bids them notice—

I.—THE CHANGING CONDITION OF THE WORLD. “Knowing the time, that now it is high time for you to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.” With prophetic vision, as from the mountain peak of Divine inspiration, he looks beyond the intervening valleys of trials and persecution; “light afflictions which are but for a moment;” and he hails the dawning light, whose brightness shall yet cover the earth as the waters cover the great deep.

He saw, he knew, that the world was in transition. “The little leaven” of the Gospel was “leavening the whole lump.” Here were the signs and proofs.

1.—*The passing darkness.* “The night is far spent.” The apostle assured them of what he himself had seen and known. The glorious Gospel of Christ, which had begun at Jerusalem, was spreading throughout Asia, was making its way into Europe, and had even found an entrance into the metropolis of the Roman Empire. Surely no city in the world needed Christianity more than this; and here it had come. It was destined to fill the world. “Knowing the time,” the critical period in the world’s history, the mighty under-current of religious thought, the powerful agencies of Christianity which were at work, and would shortly produce amazing upheavals of society; knowing this period and these things, the apostle urges them “that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.” The “night” of heathen darkness was passing away, and why should Christians who are of the day be found sleeping. With the passing darkness there was also ;—

2. *The nearing dawn.* “The day is at hand.” “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The light of Gospel truth which was dawning elsewhere was beginning to glimmer

even in Rome; for the Gospel was to be "preached to every creature." The clouds of thick heathen darkness were breaking, and "the Sun of righteousness" was about to "arise with healing in His wings." What encouragement there was for them to go on their way rejoicing. But how great was the necessity for watchful steadfastness. How beautifully has the dawning of this Gospel light been described by one of the most gifted preachers of this day.* "Dark clouds may sweep the changing sky, eclipse the upper lights, and spread their gloomy shadows over these lower scenes. These clouds shall break in blessings and pass away. Heavenly orbs shall beam in brightness from the clearest azure, and the 'light of the morn shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold.'" Let us notice,—

II.—THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD. With the light of knowledge comes the call to duty. When the light of God's truth shines forth, even in the midst of darkness, there must be no doubting, no hesitancy. Every noble spirit will answer; every loyal soldier will prepare for action; for the call to duty is the roll-call of heaven. Like faithful Abraham, his spiritual children must be ready to obey when the command is given. The voice of duty; the voice of God by His servant, the apostle, to those Roman converts was,—

1.—*To awake out of their lethargy.* "It is high time to awake out of sleep." There is a diseased drowsiness, a lethargy of life, which ends in soul deadness. It is a fearful affliction which lulls men into apathy and indifference, even in the face of the most momentous issues. Sin benumbs the vitality of the soul, and, like the cold and fast-falling snows, lures men on to sleep the sleep of death. Athens was "full of idols;" Rome was full of wickedness, "rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying." Around this handful of converts there was the darkness of moral night. Men were indulging in the sleep of sin, the sleep of indifference to all that is good and pure and holy. But startling as a trumpet-call the voice of the apostle sounded forth saying, "awake!" They were also,—

* Dr. David Thomas. See Homilist, Vol. I., page 15.

2. *To equip for their contest.* "Let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." They must cast off the sleeping garments in which souls are lulled to sleep the sleep of death. They must cast off the night garments of "the filthiness of the flesh." They must "put on the armour of light"; armour that would bear looking upon in the light of day. The "armour of light" is the armour of heaven; it is "the Lord Jesus Christ." "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." Having Christ, we have a glorious equipment. We have the girdle, the breastplate, and greaves; the shield, the helmet, and the sword; the whole armour of God. It was well for these Christians at Rome, as it is for all Christians, to know their position and duty. Again they were called upon—

3. *To walk becomingly.* "Let us walk honestly as in the day." As men and Christians they were to live and act consistently. They were to walk honestly, prudently, and blamelessly, according to the principles of the new religion they had adopted. Their conduct was to be such as would bear the light of day, and not after the fashion of the night revellings of those around them. Their night was well-nigh past; they were now become children of the light and of the day. Their character was to be formed after the model of their Lord and Master. In all this they would need great faithfulness and strong courage, and they must be prepared for trial and persecution. In Judea there were stones, and in Rome there were lions. The disciples said to Jesus, "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again?" But His meat and drink was to do the will of His Father in heaven. His duty and love for men called Him, and He went in the face of the cross itself. And this must be the spirit of all Christ's faithful followers. Faithful unto death. Ere long the yell of "the maddening crowd" in Rome would be, "The Christian to the lions"; and then would be the test of fortitude. But even in this dread hour a strength from heaven shall be given them, an all-conquering faith and love, and the night of the martyr's death shall end in the dawn of eternal day.

The true Christian will maintain his loyalty to his Divine

Master, brave, heroic, unmoveable, because he knows that Christ is right and the world is wrong. Because He who was crucified for his sake is dearer than life itself. Because He who is for him is more than all who can be against him. Because when persecution and death have done their all, in the full assurance of faith he has a bright and blessed hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave.

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The Power of the Invisible.

“THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TO COME.”—*Hebrews* vi. 5.

ANOTHER world than this mighty scheme in which we live is a very marvellous, astonishing, and supernatural conception. It is not a thing easily proved or believed. It demands, as the late Canon Mozley says, “an effort and ascent of the mind.” Truly a prolonged and strenuous effort, and a mental ascent steep and difficult. Though the theoretical difficulties in the way of accepting the fact are so complex and overwhelming, yet the heart clings to it. Faith in “a world to come” is the sacred inheritance of man. It is impossible to suppress the conviction; the heart will not be deprived of it. Spinoza was constrained by his system to deny “a continued existence,” yet he believed in it. Hegel speaks of “a longing after it which must be satisfied,” though logically he denied immortality.*

“The world to come” is not a truth at all contrary to the “principle of unity.” Not a world absolutely disconnected from this. It is, as Delitzsch says, a world that has “not yet *appeared*, but is already *present* as the hidden background of the world that now is.” Compare Emerson’s saying, “Other world; there

* Cf. The very remarkable and thought-begetting book by Dr. L. Schneider, “The Idea of Immortality in the Faith and Philosophy of the Peoples.”

is no other world. God is One and Omnipresent, here or nowhere is the whole fact."

What then are "the powers of the world to come"? All that the Christian believer accepts and experiences in the revelation made by God to man concerning an immortal and invisible and future world. *E.g.* (a) Its *nature*: that it will be sinless, permanent, and perfect. (b) Its *occupants*: the angels, the disembodied spirits, &c. (c) Its *Ruler*: God.

What will be the effect of realizing "the powers of the world to come"?

I.—THERE WILL BE A REGULATING INFLUENCE UPON OUR PRESENT LIFE. Note the power that unseen things, even in temporal matters, exercise. To live with the invisible as ever with us will affect our *inward* life. That hidden spot where only God can penetrate. Such will become increasingly *pure*, for the world to come is free from any defilement, &c. It will become increasingly *holy*, for there God the Holy reigns, &c. It will affect our *outward* life. It will make us increasingly *human, just, unselfish*.* It will give the lie to the sneers and sarcasms of the disbeliever. The secularist says "You cannot live for both worlds because you do not know both" (*cf.* "Principles of Secularism," page 6). "We would realize this life; we would deserve another, but without the selfishness which craves it, or the presumption which expects it, or the discontent which demands" (*cf.* "Secularism distinguished from Unitarianism," page 16). One Christian truly believing and experiencing "the powers of the world to come" will show that he *can* live for both worlds without "selfishness," "presumption," or "discontent."

II.—THERE WILL BE A SUSTAINING INFLUENCE; *e. g.*, in times of *despondency* either from personal or relative causes. We see now only "in part." All shall be harmonious in the world to come. In times of *sadness, loss, temptation*. What joy will come out of our present grief; what gain even from loss; and

* Dr. Aveling says, "As men become more human they will become less Christian." Quoted, page 41, in "Reasonable Apprehensions and Reassuring Hints," by Rev. H. Footman. A book of great originality and freshness of thought. Invaluable to all who wish to defend "the faith of Christ."

what results from our trials. We can bear bravely all that this life puts upon us, and wait for the "eternal years."

III.—THERE WILL BE A RESTRAINING INFLUENCE. All forms of sin will thus be checked. (1) *Thoughts, motives, professions, deeds*, will be kept in the right direction. Who could willingly and deliberately plan and work evil, knowing that there is a "world to come," and *such* a world as revelation declares it to be. Who that has felt the powers of the world to come can but say—

"Eternal Light, eternal Light,
How pure that soul must be,
That lives and looks on Thee."

(2) *There will be no apostasy of heart or life.* (See context.) Live, then, so that the "life beyond the grave" may not only be an object of promise and expectation, but one that you feel "the stirrings" of even here. Live so that you may daily see that world "perpetually breaking through the crust that binds it." What will death then be but change of position and "environment;" a higher and fuller life.

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Temptation in the Nineteenth Century.

"AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM
EVIL."—*Matthew* vi. 13.

WE will get at the meaning of the text. See Revised Version. From this we proceed to glean out texts that refer to temptation.

1. *Matt.* xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray," &c. There new light is thrown on the petition; the heart yearns to do right, but human nature dictates wrong. Therefore we pray,—Give us strength to escape the wrong. 2. *Luke* xxii. 40, 46. Here, too, the onus of temptation is thrown on men; not on God. That fact would make the petition take the further import,—Give us

grace to detect temptation, and always be gifted with detecting power,—to see the wrong and shun it. 3. 1 *Cor.* x. 13. This would make the petition bear the interpretation, not to escape temptation altogether, but have grace to escape its *evil* influence. 4. 2 *Peter* ii. 9. This throws us back to confidence in God. We, in the petition, confess our inability to resist it of ourselves. Here we are praying to God to deliver us out of temptation's disastrous influence, and be at once confident He has power to do it. 5. *Rev.* iii. 10. Temptations common to all men; but God sure to deliver, if we be but upright.

But what of texts like these? James i. 12. Here temptation is a blessing. Question: must we, therefore, pray to be delivered from them? The next verse throws another light. We say, Lead us not into temptation; James says, Let no man say,—“Tempted of God.” On the surface, one text says,—God can tempt me: the other,—Do not hint at such a thing.

In support of the text, some say,—God tempted Abraham. Then they lay beside it our text and that of James's,—“Neither tempteth He any man.” Explain that glaring contradiction. Simply thus: God's mode is very different from the devil's. God tests, so as to allure to good ultimately; Satan endeavours to seduce into his own toils. The one would build up good lastingly; the other would effect ruin. Take all the texts quoted, and the text may be explained: Suffer us not to fall under Satan's power. He watches, tempts, snares, waits; give us grace that we yield not to him. Therefore give us the watching power, the delivering hand.

The petition—a very necessary one. Never yet did a man pass unscathed through life,—save the God-man. Never yet did man pass through this world of ours untempted,—not even our Master. Never yet did man so possess the spirit of goodness as to be able to dispense with this petition,—“Lead us,” &c.

I.—We note, for purposes of caution, THE TEMPTATIONS COMMON TO ALL MEN.

(a) *To be loyal to self but disloyal to God.* The true standard of good is loyalty to God, then loyalty to ourselves. If not loyal to Him, then are we our own worst enemies. The gist of the

petition is, that God would give us such a conception of our personal insufficiencies that we should ever acknowledge His supremacy.

(b) The temptation *to be impatient*. The quick and angry word, or a wearing fretfulness; virulent anger on slight provocation. Many of us are naturally irritable. Then so much the more need to spurn this unhappy characteristic. The best of men have been under this baneful influence—impatience. Moses, Paul, shall we not say Job? Peter, that irascible disciple. We need the prayer on this behalf, and copy of the meek and patient One.

(c) The temptation *to degrade the divine ideals of life: i.e.* to substitute some insipid sort of splendour for the grand conceptions of the Saviour.

(d) The temptation *to lose courage in the spiritual warfare*. We want to be holy, yet when we would do good evil is present with us; there are hills to climb, pitfalls, snares, lions, enemies in ambush, and, therefore, fear.

(e) The temptation *to avoid the path of duty*. Not because it is opposed to our intentions or desires; not because we are naturally evil, perhaps; but because when we glance along that path it shows itself uninvitingly,—hard, slippery, rugged, steep, perilous, dark, &c.

(f) The temptation *to excuse ourselves when we have sinned, blaming God*. We have, therefore, a hard struggle before us, and greatest need to pray for grace to maintain integrity and combat difficulty.

II.—THE TEMPTATIONS PECULIAR TO THE PRESENT TIME. What may be especially denominated nineteenth century temptations.

1. *Worldliness*. What is worldliness? Robertson says,—“Worldliness consists in three things: Attachment to the outward, attachment to the transitory, attachment to the unreal; in opposition to love for the inward, the eternal, the true; and the one of these affections is necessarily expelled by the other.” I am convinced that the danger of the day is to be too liberal-minded. I would be the last to advocate the puritanic precision which made religion nauseous, irksome, burdensome; but there

can be too much laxity, just as there can be too much restraint. Christianity demands the happy medium,—that which says there can be two sides to every question, and both demanding careful attention. The sacred and the secular are the two sides of a well-developed life. Unhappily we have the tendency to grant the theory and ignore it in practice. Is it open to question that the trend is too much in one direction only—too much to what is secular? We become *absorbed* in the secular; only *interested* in the sacred. Very possibly the ratio of attention bestowed on what is secular and what is sacred, stands about the same as the relation of the week-days to the Sabbath,—six to one. That *one* is augmented by a slight margin of time culled out of the six, for hurried prayers that content the conscience. We know that this worldliness is the premier danger of the day. We are in danger—even in our Christian churches—of pandering to the secular, at the expense, if not sacrifice, of the sacred. Then we need to pray,—Keep us from temptation.

2. *Formalism.* Without doubt the Protestantism of the day is endangered by the extreme and increasing influence of this formalism. Formalism and worldliness are twin-sisters, and between them they are spoiling the Protestant structure of its intrinsic worth and beauty. The bugbear of the nineteenth century is *appearance*. Let me be like the Pharisees, of whom the Master had so much to say, and then a splendid reputation is mine; I get no better reputation—so far as men are concerned—if I am absolutely heart-pure. Formalism needs watching, lest it achieves what it now threatens and attempts. It means to enter every section of the Church. In some it is openly ruling; in others present, but cloaked. The absorbing desire is so widely felt—*do so much*, content your conscience, and that may satisfy your God! Nay, verily! Feeling, therefore, this tendency we pray,—“Lead us not into temptation.”

3. *The nature of business relationships reveals another temptation*, specially pregnant with power to-day. The charge is being made boldly of commercial immorality. Is it a true one? There must be speculation, for speculation is the soul of business. But there is a mark, to pass which is to sin. A man, as he goes, must go

on sound principles. He must feel his ground under him, and it must be solid. Let him once begin to feel it slide, let there be the indication of quicksands, and he must stay. Let him go beyond that, and he is sinning grievously. You business men understand this. Make commerce stand at chance's mercy, just as a game often stands at the mercy of the dice-box, and what are you, as business-men? The commerce has become a gambling experiment; and that, like all gambling, is a sin, a crime against humanity as well as God. There are bankruptcies and frauds. Mark that! An honest man may fail,—drawn down by cruel accidents and others' roguery. A rogue may fail, and mean it! You business men, therefore, be on the alert, and pray to be led out of the way of commercial sins.

4. *There is the antiquarian snare; i.e.,* the tendency to build on traditions. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, and therefore will we. Then what about having hearts that can comprehend? Are we automata? Mere machines? Traditional considerations, surely, will have no weight with God. The question is,—What do YE? We are personally related to religion; not through any family connection. If we are traditional Christians, then let us dismiss the tradition, and seek the Christianity which only can be claimed by our individuality. This tendency to take up family and national tradition is one that should set us sternly against an insinuating temptation; and, therefore, we should as eagerly pray to be delivered from its snare.

5. *Pride.* The nineteenth century phantom. Not that it is a thing of modern growth only. It has always existed. But as the days go on the world grows richer; public honours gain in value; high office has a greater influence than service God-ward, &c. Pride has made many of our modern thinkers imagine themselves semi-gods. We want in this day to learn our rightful power, and not be puffed up with the intellectual achievements, &c.

6. *Speculation,* in matters of intellect and heart. Now-a-days intellect often opposes revelation. Revelation, if accepted at all, by many, is accepted simply as an object of criticism. Faith is pronounced unscientific; oftener than not is set forth to be ridiculed,

or is ignored. As for the result of this speculation, observe the labyrinth. Men have lost themselves in it, and a clear and even pathway may be assumed impossible.

Is there an antidote to all these temptations? Yes! One antidote in the prayer—"Lead us not," &c. Another: watchfulness. Another: the reliance of a finite heart on an Infinite One. This is the reliance we exercise, whensoever we pray,—*"Lead us not into temptation."*

GOMERSAL, LEEDS.

ALBERT LEE, F.R.G.S.

Confession Reciprocated.

"WHOSOEVER THEREFORE SHALL CONFESS ME BEFORE MEN, HIM WILL I CONFESS ALSO BEFORE MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."—*Matthew x. 32.*

YET some say, "The way of the Lord is not equal."

I.—MAN'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST. To "confess" Christ is to declare Him in His true character,—in the majesty, mystery, and glory of His person, and in all the functions He sustains toward us, as our Prophet, to *reveal truth*; as our Priest, to *atone* and *intercede*"; and as our King, to *rule supreme* in our lives. It implies—

(1) *Knowledge of Christ.* Not simply in His relation to the universe, as Creator and "sustaining all things by the word of His power." Not as the Author of eternal salvation simply, but as the Author of *our* salvation. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

(2) *Belief in Christ.* In *His pre-existence, incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession* at the right hand of God.

(3) *Devotion to Christ.* Obeying His injunction,—*"My son, give Me thine heart."* Submitting to His law, and seeking to be conformed to His image and likeness. True devotion thrones Christ in the heart as King.

(4) *Love to Christ.* No confession is reciprocated that does not spring from love to Christ. Man's religion is ruinously defective if he is not prompted by Christ's love to him to "confess Him before men" (1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3).

In order to meet Divine recognition, man's confession of Christ must be (a) a *personal* confession. "Confess Me." Not the Bible or the Church, not My doctrines or teachings, but "Me." Christ Himself is salvation,—not His teaching, or His doctrine, or His church. They are only lights and sign-posts pointing the sinner to Him. His invitation is,—“Look unto Me all ye ends of the earth and be ye saved.” (b) It must be a *public* confession—“before men.” Some say,—I can be a Christian and nobody know it. God has given no such assurance. Blessed privilege for the creature to be thus called upon to confess the Creator; to be a soldier in the army of the Prince of Peace, and not only answer the roll-call, but wear our uniform and show our colours.

II.—CHRIST'S CONFESSION OF MAN. “Him will I confess also.” It is a reciprocated confession, and is here taught,—

(1) Christ's confession of men will be *utterly impartial*. “Whosoever.” No favouritism here. The man who will be without Divine approval at the judgment, will be the author of his own damnation.

(2) Christ's confession of man will be *personal*. “Him will I also confess.” Not somebody else, by mistake or preference, but *him*. Christ never blunders, and blesses the wrong man. Nor can any Jacob so impersonate Esau as to get his brother's birth-right. Honest Christian confession will surely bring a response from God some day *to the man that makes it*.

(3) Christ's confession of men will be *sacred*. “In heaven,” and on the most momentous occasion—before an assembled universe.

(4) Christ's confession of man will be *public*. “Before My Father.” Christ's confession of man will be made at a time, in a place, and in a presence when it will amount to something. God help us so to live that we may hear it by and bye.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Chapter iii. 1, 2.—“MY BRETHREN, BE NOT MANY MASTERS (TEACHERS), KNOWING THAT HE SHALL RECEIVE THE GREATER CONDEMNATION (HEAVIER JUDGMENT). FOR IN MANY THINGS WE ALL OFFEND (STUMBLE). IF ANY MAN OFFEND NOT IN WORD, THE SAME IS A PERFECT MAN, ABLE ALSO TO BRIDLE THE WHOLE BODY.”

THE Jews were very fond of expounding the law, and when they became Christians they seem to have been just as fond of expounding the Gospel. There was a strong sense of self-superiority in them, as in the strongly marked tendency to put themselves forward as Rabbis, or, as they delighted to call themselves, guides of the blind, lights of them that were in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes. This tendency was not wholly overcome by their conversion to the faith of Jesus Christ, and one of the difficulties it had to encounter was just this itching desire to teach on the part of those who should have been content to learn. In the case of those who were satisfied with the mere profession of faith, who were not impelled by a living faith to produce the fruits of faith, who were content to *say* and not to *do*, this desire to become teachers would be the more intense; and for this reason, that profession without practice is loud profession; if the energies are not expended in work they must be expended in talk; if there be not the humility of teachableness there will be the haughtiness of superior knowledge: guides of the blind, teachers of babes!

It is this people to whom James is writing, the people then who need the exhortation which seems to come in here so abruptly, but really so naturally: “Be not many of you masters,

schoolmasters, teachers of the law, and preachers of the Gospel.

Faith
deepened by
silent
service.

You have strong proclivities in this direction, these proclivities are strengthened in some of you by the very shallowness of your faith: resist these proclivities, deepen your faith by silent service; then, when faith is strong and services are abundant, come forward, if it is to be of further service, and tell what the Lord has done for your soul: meanwhile, let not many of you become teachers."

If the word "masters" here had meant mastership, it would have contradicted that other word, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren:" the apostle would have said, be none of you masters; but he says, "be not many of you masters," implying that some might: according to that other word, "He gave some pastors and teachers." There is no mastership in the Church of Christ, there is service in the way of teaching.

But, my brethren, be not many of you teachers, do not rashly rush into the work of "this ministry," do not, in a blind or sectarian zeal, assume the functions of that office which, more

Qualifications
for
"Teaching."

than any other, needs long and careful preparation, needs calm and deliberate forethoughtedness, and unremitting thoughtfulness; needs that rarest of all combinations, the widest learning and culture, with the most humble and earnest piety, the profoundest knowledge of the hearts of other men, with the most utter distrust and self-abnegation. It is difficult, in speaking on a subject like this, to avoid going to extremes, discouraging some who, in the opinion of those who know them best, are just those who ought to forego everything else for the work of the ministry; on the other hand, encouraging others to undertake it before they have got a grip of their own faith, or before their own faith has got a grip of them. But there are, indirectly, three things which may be said—

First: That the distinction between teachers and taught should, in all ordinary circumstances, be observed, extraordinary circumstances, of course, being a law unto themselves. Every member

There are
Teachers and
Taught.

of a Church is not fit to be its minister; some who might have something to say that would be for edification, have, on the other hand, such cause to

be silent that more would be gained by their silence than by their speech: while, in general, the great body of the people, unable to find the time for protracted study, and harassed with the cares of every-day life, are glad to take the place of learners, if they may but get light for their path and comfort for their souls at the lips of those they have called for this very thing.

The *second* thing is, the Divine wisdom displayed by the Head of the Church in instituting the office of the ministry, in giving pastors and teachers. We take this very much as a matter of course; we have been so long accustomed to it that we cannot well conceive a different state of things. But just suppose there were no such office, no body of men whose duty, whose sole duty it was to acquaint themselves with Scripture that they might

He gave
Pastors and
Teachers.

help those to this acquaintance who, in the struggle of life, had little leisure, and in many cases less ability to make it for themselves. Suppose there

were no expositions of Scripture spoken or written, except by those who have only the leisure hours after the exhaustion of daily business to devote to them, would the Church have been enriched as it has been, Christian men and women instructed and comforted, progress in the knowledge of Divine things, in which we all rejoice and in which we all share. The motives of those who rail at what they are pleased to call the one-man ministry may be sincere enough; the chief characteristic of their position is lack of wisdom. Their theory (is it their practice?) is that every believer is at liberty in their gatherings to preach the Word as the Spirit shall give them utterance. Is every believer able, after the necessarily slight preparation which can ordinarily be given to the study of Scripture, to exhort to edification? No, says common sense; and common sense is too strong even for them; and so "the Word" ordinarily falls into the hands of the very few,—sometimes, has it not been known, into the hands of

The One-man
Ministry.

the one-man. But do these few speak as the Spirit gives them utterance? How comes it about then that the more practice they have in speaking the better speakers they become,—more cogent, more persuasive? The inspiration of the Holy Ghost should surely help a man to speak as well the

first time as the twentieth! The theory will not stand the strain; it breaks down on all hands, and its break-down is but another justification of the Church which, in all her branches, has provided for the work of the ministry "Divinity Halls," where the student is prepared, so that when he undertakes this work he does not need to cast about for matter, does not need to be beyond measure troubled about manner, but fully fraught with the word of life—no novice—is "apt to teach."

The *third* thing is the spiritual danger to those men themselves who prematurely rush into religious teaching, or who are foolishly pushed into it by those who ought to know better. There is a danger in public religious address which is all the more real in that it is not perceived or suspected by the zeal which overlooks everything else but the religious end it is seeking to gain; it is the danger of deadening those very impressions which impel to religious address. A young person has been religiously impressed, has come under religious conviction, has passed through religious experiences, has been converted. Do you know the greatest harm you can do him? Put him forward to tell his religious experiences in a public meeting. Would you, on the other hand, do him the greatest service? Get him to cherish in silent retirement the principles that have taken hold of him till they have had time to become part of him, till they are able to bear the tear and wear of the struggle with the out-side world.

But to pass from these things to the ground on which the apostle bases the injunction, "Be not many teachers"; the liability to greater condemnation, heavier judgment, which they incur who, putting themselves forward as teachers of the law, fail to obey its precepts; who, enforcing the obligations of the Gospel, bring these obligations into contempt by their own inconsistent or unworthy lives.

There are temptations peculiar to the office of the ministry, chief of which is the temptation to be satisfied with the performance of public duties. A minister's duty to others lies in the midst of, is, so to speak, made up of the things of religion; and because of this he is tempted to

**The Greater
Condemnation.**

believe that when he has preached a sermon to others, he has thereby practised it for himself. In the sermon he lays down to others the obligations of the Gospel, but what if he shirks, is known to shirk, these obligations himself; what if, by his "saying" and "not doing," he brings contempt upon the Gospel and wounds the Saviour in the house of His friends? Surely he incurs greater condemnation than if he had kept silence, had not assumed the office of the teacher, had not raised himself to prominence, and set himself forward as the guide and example of others!

The apostle includes himself in this liability to greater condemnation. He does not take his stand upon some "goodly height," look down thence upon other teachers, and warn them that *they* shall receive. He comes down beside them, apostle though he be, feeling his own weakness and the force of his own temptations, knowing that he is of like passions with themselves: he says *we* shall receive! The true minister says, Amen.

The line of thought along which the apostle would now lead his readers seems to be the following:—Be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation; and this the more for that we all offend in many points, specially in the use of the tongue, in the use of which if a man does not offend at all he is a perfect man, able, as this shows him to be, in directing and guiding the whole man. As we are all liable to stumble, as we all do stumble, more or less, we should be very cautious how we covet a position in which, if we stumble, we shall only the more exaggerate our offence; specially cautious should we be in coveting a position where we shall have to use that instrument in the use of which, above all others, we are most apt to offend. The apostle is about to say a good many things about the tongue,—its power, its power for evil, its inconsistency, its irrationality, and it is by means of these two thoughts he works his way to them. First, generally, we all offend in many points; second, we all offend in one special point, so much so that if we could find a man who did not offend in this point we might safely call him a perfect man.

First, we all offend in many points: you, more flagrantly in

some, I, more flagrantly in others. This man stumbles where another walks upright: here is one who offends, is shaken, and cast down, while his neighbour, looking on, wonders that so little should have moved him; this one, in his turn, is tripped up by what was never even in the other's path. More than this, it is at many points we all offend; if it were only at one, if we were safe at all others, we might be fortifying ourselves where we were weak; but it is not so; where we thought ourselves safe we are the least safe, at this very point who has not known himself stumble? "If He should contend with us who could answer Him for one in a thousand?" *We all offend in many points.*

Second, we all offend in one point—one point which we can specify—one point about which there is no dispute. Without controversy, we all offend *in word*. There are degrees in this, of course, as well as in everything else. Some have no control over their tongues, they say what comes first; and if it be firebrands, arrows, and death, well, these must just come! It may be a stinging jest which leaves an inflamed and festering wound; it may be a stab at some reputation which will never be healed; it may be censorious judgment, or a commendation of evil; no matter, it is the uppermost thing—and the uppermost thing comes first. But all are not like this; many a jest is kept back because it would wound a sensitive soul; many a report is suppressed because it would damage a good name; many an uncharitable impulse has been sternly crushed back; but do not even the most kindly, the most thoughtful, the most charitable, need to confess that despite all their watchfulness, and all their prayers, they have yet often offended in word, that they have often regretted their inconsiderate speech, that they have often wished to recal their thoughtless words? There is one point in which we all offend.

It is just because we all do it that we think so little of it, that we treat it so lightly, pass it off with so little reprobation.

What is done by everybody, everybody easily does. What is done by everybody, everybody easily does; what everybody is guilty of lessens everybody's guilt; and so, even when we feel regret (how

seldom it is remorse) for an unkind word, how quickly we forget all about it! It was a hasty word; or, we did not mean all that we now see it meant; and so we blunt the edge of the knife that might otherwise have cut down to the root, and cured us of the disease.

The whole matter is a personal one. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body." The application of this passage is for all: it is specially for the preacher of the Word. Most of his work is done in and through the Word; well, he may stumble in doctrine, or in the manner of expounding doctrine; in rebuke, or in the manner of giving rebuke; he may speak when silence would have been the most salutary teaching; he may argue when example would have been the most persuasive.

On the other hand, with its manifold liabilities to err, what a glorious opportunity is his as ambassador of Christ, to beseech his fellow-men to be reconciled to God. He has but to seek and obtain the aids of His Spirit, whose voice was not heard in the streets, and he will be taught to speak a word in season to him that is weary. His speech will distil as the dew, because the law of truth and kindness will be in his heart and on his lips.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY.

"There is no part of the man which is not immortal and divine when it is once given to God; and no part of him which is not mortal by the second death, and brutal before the first, when it is withdrawn from God. For to what shall we trust for our distinction from the brutes which perish? To our higher intellect? Yet are we not bidden to be as wise as the serpent, and to consider the ways of the ant? Or our affections? Nay, these are much more shared by the lower animals than our intelligence: Hamlet leaps into the grave of his beloved, and leaves it; a dog had stayed. Humanity and immortality consist neither in reason nor in love; not in the body nor in the animation of the heart of it, nor in the thoughts stirring in the brain of it; but in the dedication of them all to Him who will raise them up at the last day."—RUSKIN.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

A Striking Reformation, a Ruthless Despotism, and an Unprincipled Diplomacy.

“NOW IT CAME TO PASS,” &c.—2 *Kings* xviii. 1-37.

AMONGST the incidents recorded and the characters mentioned in this chapter, there stand out in great prominence three subjects for practical contemplation:—*a striking reformation, a ruthless despotism, and an unprincipled diplomacy.* The many strange and somewhat revolting historic events that make up the bulk of this chapter will come out in the discussion of these three subjects.

I.—A STRIKING REFORMATION. Hezekiah, who was now king of Judah, and continued such for about twenty-nine years, was a man of some excellence. The unknown historian here says that “*He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did,*” &c.

(verses 3-8.) All this is high testimony, and his history shows that on the whole it was well-deserved. Compared with most of his predecessors and contemporaries he appears to have been a man of much excellence. He lived in a period of great national trial and moral corruption. Israel, Judah’s sister kingdom, was in its death throes, and its own people had fallen into idolatry of the grossest kind. In the very dawn of his reign he sets himself to the work of reformation. We find in 2 Chron. xxix. 2-36, a description of the desire for a thorough reformation which displayed itself. But the point of his reformatory work, on which we would now fasten our attention, is that mentioned in verse 4,—“*He removed the high places*

and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan."

His method for extirpating idolatry from his country is detailed with minuteness in 2 Chron. xxix. 3; xxx. 1-9. In this destruction of the brasen serpent we are struck with two things:—

First: *The perverting tendency of sin.* The brasen serpent (we learn from Num. xxi. 9) was a beneficent ordinance of God to heal those in the wilderness who had been bitten by the fiery serpent. But this Divine ordinance, designed for a good purpose, and which had accomplished good, was now, through the forces of human depravity, become a great evil. The Jews turned what was a special display of Divine goodness into a great evil. I am disposed to honour them for preserving it for upwards of seven hundred years, and thus handing it down from sire to son as a *memorial* of heavenly mercy; but their

conduct in establishing it as an object for worship must be denounced without hesitancy or qualification. But is not this the great law of depravity? Has it not always perverted the good things of God, and thus converted blessings into curses? It has ever done so! It is doing so now! See how this perverting power acts in relation to such Divine blessings, as (1) health; (2) riches; (3) genius; (4) knowledge; (5) governments; and (6) religious institutions. It turns temples into shops, the Gospel into creeds, sacraments and Sabbaths into superstitions.*

Another thing which strikes us in connection with the destruction of this brasen serpent is—

Secondly: *The true attributes of a reformer.* Here we observe (1) Spiritual insight. Hezekiah saw in this serpent which appeared like a God to the people, nothing but a piece of brass—"Nehustan." What is grand to the vulgar is contemptible to the spiritually thoughtful. The true reformer peers into the heart of things, and finds

* See Homilist, Vol. II., Page 193.

that the gods of the people are but of common brass. Here we observe (2) Invincible honesty. He not only saw that it was brass, but said so,—thundered it into the ears of the people. How many there are who have eyes to see the vile and contemptible in the objects which popular feeling admires and adores, but who lack the honesty to express their convictions! A true man not only sees the wrong but exposes it. Here we observe (3) Practical courage. This reformer not only had the insight to see, and the honesty to expose the worthlessness of the people's gods, but he had the courage to strike them from their pedestal. "*He brake in pieces the brasen serpent.*" I have no hope of any man doing any real spiritual good who has not these *three* instincts. He must not only have an eye to penetrate the seeming and to descry the real, nor merely be honest enough to speak out his views, but he must have, also the manly hand to "*break in pieces*" the false, in order to do the Divine work of *reform*. The man that has the three combined is the reformer.

Almighty Love! multiply amongst us men of this three-fold instinct—men which the age, the world demands!

Another thing which strikes us in connection with the destruction of this brasen serpent is—

Thirdly: *The true soul of a reformer.* What is that which gave him the true insight and attributes of a reformer, which in truth was the soul of the whole? (1) Entire consecration to the right. "*He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord, and departed not from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses.*" "*He trusted in and clave to the One true and living God, and kept His commandments.*" And this is right, and there is no right but this. (2) Invincible antagonism to the wrong. "*And he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.*" "The yearly tribute his father had stipulated to pay, he withheld. Pursuing the policy of a truly theocratic sovereign, he was,

through the Divine blessing which rested on his government, raised to a position of great public and national strength. Shalmaneser had withdrawn from Palestine, being engaged in a war with Tyre, or, perhaps, was dead; and assuming, consequently, that full independent sovereignty which God had settled on the house of David, he both shook off the Assyrian yoke, and, by an energetic movement against the Philistines, recovered from that people the territory which they had taken from his father, Ahaz" (2 Chron. xxviii. 18). Here we have—

II.—A RUTHLESS DESPOTISM.

There are two despots mentioned in this chapter—Shalmaneser and Sennacherib, both kings of Assyria. A brief description of the former we have in verses 9, 10, 12. What is stated in these verses is but a brief repetition of what we have in the preceding chapter, and the remarks made on it in our last article preclude the necessity of any observations here. This Shalmaneser was a tyrant of the worst kind. He invaded and ravaged the land of Israel, threw Hoshea

into prison, laid siege to Samaria, carried the Israelites into Assyria, and located in their own homes strangers from various parts of the Assyrian dominions. Thus he utterly destroyed the kingdom of Israel.

The other despot is Sennacherib. (Read verses 13-16.) Shalmaneser is gone, and this Sennacherib takes his place. The ruthlessness of this man's despotism appears in the following facts, recorded in the chapter:—

First: *He had already invaded a country in which he had no right.* "Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them." "The names of the principal of these cities are enumerated by Micah (i. 11-16), viz:—*Saphir*, lying between Ashdod and Eleutheropolis (*Eusebius* and *Jerome*, *Onomast*, *Saphir*; cf. *Robinson*, 'Biblical Researches,' ii, p. 370); *Zaanan* or *Zenan* (Josh. xv. 37), (Septuagint *Ξευναπ*); *Beth-ezel* or *Azel* (Zech. xiv. 5), near *Saphir* and *Zaanan*; *Maroth* or *Maarath* (Josh. xv. 59), be-

tween these towns and Jerusalem; *Lachish* (Um Lâkis); *Moreshoth*, situated in the direction of Gath; *Achzib*, between Keilah and Mareshah (Josh. xv. 44); *Mareshah*, situated in the low country of Judah (Josh. xv. 44); *Adullam*, near Mareshah (cf. Isaiah xxiv. 1-12). Overrunning Palestine, Sennacherib laid siege to the fortress of Lachish, which lay seven Roman miles from Eleutheropolis, and, therefore, south-west of Jerusalem on the way to Egypt. Amongst the interesting illustrations of sacred history, furnished by the recent Assyrian excavations, is a series of bas-reliefs representing the siege of a town—a fenced town—among the uttermost cities of Judah (Josh. xv. 39). Robinson's 'Biblical Researches.' Now mark, he now determines on another invasion, although

Secondly: *He had received from the king most humble submission and large contributions to leave his country alone.* Mark his humiliating appeal,—“*And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from*

me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear.” Alas, herein is a yielding of this great man's courage. Why did he apologise, pay the tribute which his ancestor had immorally pledged? Up to this point he had been bold in withholding it. But here, in crouching fear, he makes an apology. And more than this, he unrighteously promises a large contribution in answer to the despot's demands. “*And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.*” The sum that he promised was extravagant, amounting to three hundred and fifty thousand pounds; but what was worse this sum was abstracted from the public funds, to which he had no right, and was also rifled from the temple, which was a desecration. “*And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord, and from the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it*

to the king of Assyria." The conduct of Hezekiah in this matter cannot be justified. Inasmuch as Sennacherib accepted the offering, he was in honour bound to abandon all idea of another invasion. Albeit, contrary to every principle of justice and kindness, not to say honour, he dispatches his army again into Judea. "*And the king of Assyria sent Tartan,*" &c. (ver. 17.) What moral monsters are such despots, and yet they are not rare! Is there a nation existing on the face of the earth to-day, whatever its form of government, that has not played this part? What right has Russia in Poland, Austria in Hungary, or even England in Ireland, Egypt, or India? &c. Talk about devils, there may be such for aught I know, but have men greater devils than themselves? Men are the devils of men. Here, by and amongst themselves, they are tormented with the devil and his angels. Here we have—

III.—AN UNPRINCIPLED DIPLOMACY. On behalf of Hezekiah, "*Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna the*

scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder," appeared before the invading soldiers, and they are thus addressed by Rab-shakeh, one of the generals of the invading host: "*And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?*" &c. He appears as the diplomatist of the Assyrian war-king, and what does he do? By an impassioned harangue, fraught with insolence, falsehood, and blasphemy, he urges Hezekiah and his country to surrender. In doing this—

First: *He represents his master, the king of Assyria, to be far greater than he is. "Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria."* Great, indeed! A flashing meteor and a gorgeous bubble, nothing more! A diplomatist is ever tempted to make his own country fabulously great in the presence of the one with whom he seeks to negotiate.

Secondly: *He seeks to terrify them with a sense of their utter inability to resist the invading army. "What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?"*

And with an insolent haughtiness he challenges Hezekiah to produce two thousand men, amongst his people, who know how to manage a horse. So positively does he assert his belief in their inability to do so that he promises to supply two thousand horses if he could find men qualified to use them in battle. Moreover he impiously asserts that he had come in the name of their own God to subjugate them to the Assyrian rule, and assures them that their trust in Egypt for deliverance is vain and futile. "*Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him.*" He

wickedly insinuates that Hezekiah had forfeited the protection of God on account of his destruction of the "high places and the altars" (ver. 22); that God Himself had given orders for the destruction of Jerusalem—"Have I come up without the Lord?" (ver. 25.) As if he had said, I am here in the name of your God. Furthermore, he intimates that if their God should undertake to protect them He would not be able to do so. "*Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand?**" And this harangue, well con-

* "A most important inscription," says Dr. Jamieson, "being the Annals of Sennacherib, was discovered by Mr. Layard upon a bull at the grand entrance of the palace of Kouyunjik. Amongst other military expeditions he undertook he describes minutely his invasion of Syria, mentioning the towns of Phœnecia and Judah he reduced and made tributary. Then follows an account of his attack on Hezekiah, which is recorded in the following terms:—'Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms, and by the might of my power, I took forty-six of his strong fenced cities; and of the smaller towns, which were scattered about, I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates so as to prevent escape. Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem, with thirty talents of gold, and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty (the treasures of his palace, his sons and daughters, his men-servants and maid-servants I carried captive). All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of submission to my power.'"

trived, beating with pride, malice, falsehood, and blasphemy, and withal, no doubt, well delivered, seemed to answer his purpose. Fear struck the king and people into silence. "*But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not.*" There was a deep hush in the audience. Not only did the harangue strike them into silence, but fill them with grief and dismay. "*Then came Eliakim*

the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rabshakeh." What a sad specimen of diplomacy you have in this Rab-shakeh. Unprincipled diplomacy has been the scourge of nations. There have ever been ambassadors who have created wars by specious falsehood and haughty insolence.

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SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

No. IV.

The Supreme Importance of Moral Character.

"UNTO THE PURE ALL THINGS ARE PURE: BUT UNTO THEM THAT ARE DEFILED AND UNBELIEVING IS NOTHING PURE; BUT EVEN THEIR MIND AND CONSCIENCE IS DEFILED. THEY PROFESS THAT THEY KNOW GOD; BUT IN WORKS THEY DENY HIM, BEING ABOMINABLE AND DISOBEDIENT, AND UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK REPROBATE."—*Titus* i. 15, 16. *

WE notice, at the outset, two facts suggested by the passage:

First: *That there is an essential difference in the moral characters of men.* There are

some pure and some defiled, some holy and some unholy. What is the underlying inspiring principle that makes this difference? The predom-

* Verse 14 should have been included in last article.

inant disposition. Perhaps there is no moral being in the universe who is not under the masterhood of some one sentiment or passion, to which can be traced, as to a mainspring, all the motions of his being. This controlling tendency is the moral monarch of souls, or in Scripture language, is the moral "heart of the man." This supreme disposition exists in all men in two distinct and opposite forms, either in sympathy with the true, the right, and the spiritual, or in sympathy with the false, the wrong, and the material. That soul alone is *pure* whose governing sympathy is God and the true. Supreme love for the supremely good is the true life of the soul, and the fountain of all its virtues. He whose controlling sympathies run not thus, is impure and corrupt.

Secondly: *That the outward world is to men according to this difference.* The whole external universe is to a man according to the moral state of his soul. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,"—so is he in relation to himself, to all without, and to God. This being so, the text

teaches the supreme importance of moral character. Let us look at—

I.—The morally PURE in relation to all things. "*Unto the pure all things are pure.*" This is true in relation to three things.

First: In relation to *appearance*. The proverb goes, that the greatest rogues are ever the most suspicious. A thoroughly selfish, ungodly soul will see but little good even in the best men. It is a law that man judges his fellow by himself, and the more corrupt a man is, the more severe his judgment on others. A good man is neither given to suspicion nor censoriousness; he sees some good in all men.

Secondly: In relation to *influence*. The influence of all outward things upon men is dependent on their moral character. Our Lord says, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man, but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man." The moral character is an all-transformative power in the centre of man's being. It turns the unclean into the clean, and the reverse. A good man, like the bee, can

extract honey from the bitterest plant; or, like the Æolian harp, can turn the shrieking wind into music.

Thirdly: In relation to *appropriation*. As the body lives by appropriating the outward, so does the soul; and as the effects of the appropriation, whether universal or otherwise, depend on the condition of the body's health, as the appropriation of a diseased body only increases the physical ailment; so with the soul. A corrupt soul appropriates, even from the most strengthening and refreshing means of spiritual improvement, that which weakens and destroys. Pharaoh and his host got moral mischief out of the ministry of Moses; and the men of Capernaum were pressed into a deeper and darker hell through the elevating and enlightening ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Mark then the supreme importance of moral character.

II.—The morally DEFILED in relation to all things. "*Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*" Here is

the converse. Mark in passing three things.

First: The *sphere* of the defilement. "*The mind and conscience.*" "The mind," says a modern expositor, "is the willing as well as the thinking part of man, as it has been well defined the human spirit (*pneuma*) in one of its aspects, not simply *quatenus cogitat, et intelligit*, but also *quatenus vult*. Defilement of this mind (*nous*) means that the thoughts, wishes, purposes, activities, are all stained and debased. The second of these, the conscience (*suneidesis*), is the moral consciousness within, and that which is ever bringing up the memory of the past, with its omissions and commissions, its errors, its cruel heartless unkindness, its selfish disregard of others. When this is defiled, then this last safeguard of the soul is broken down. The man and woman of the defiled conscience is self-satisfied, hard, impenitent to the last." Every part and faculty of the soul stained with sin. The body may be cleansed by ceremonial ablutions, and the external manners and speech kept pure by culture and civilization, but the soul be

black, the outside of the "cup and of the platter clean," but inside full of corruption. Mark—

Secondly: The *cause* of the defilement. "*They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him.*" There is nothing, perhaps, so morally defiling to the soul as religious hypocrisy. The man who, with the lip, professes to know God, and who in the life denies Him, gets deeper stains upon his soul, than the agnostic who professes that he knows nothing about Him. What millions in our churches every Sunday publicly, at each service, avow with their lip their belief in God, but in their week-day life "He is not in all their thoughts." Thus souls get deeply dyed in corruption in Christian churches.

Thirdly: The *hideousness* of the defilement. "*Being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*" However fair their conduct in the religious observances, they are "abominable" within, hideous to the eye of God. However rigorous in their observances and religious ordinances, they are "disobedient" in heart; they

outrage moral laws; however useful they regard themselves and appear to others, they are reprobate, they are rejected and worthless.

These "defiled" in soul, defile every thing without, all outward things in their appearance, influences, and appropriation are to them corrupt.

CONCLUSION.—Mark—

First: *The natural sovereignty of the human soul.* We are not necessarily the creatures of the outward, we have, within, the power to bend circumstances to our will, to get good out of evil, to turn outward dissonance into music, deformity into beauty, poison into nourishment. Let us adore our Maker for this wonderful endowment—an endowment which guards us from the coercion of outward forces, secures to us an inward freedom of action, and enables us to put all outward things in subjection to our own spiritual selves. Mark—

Secondly: *The dependency of the soul's destiny on itself.* A man's destiny depends upon his moral character, and his character depends upon him-

self. As food, however nutritious, cannot administer strength to a man's body without the digestive and appropriate power, so no external influences, however good and useful in themselves, can raise a man's soul, without the right action of its faculties. Man cannot be made good. His body may be borne to the summit of a lofty mountain, without the use of his limbs, but if his soul is to ascend "the holy hill of the Lord," he must climb it every inch himself. Fortune or patronage may raise him to some eminent social position, but he cannot reach a single stage of moral dignity—the true dignity of man—apart from his own earnest endeavours. The transformative power of the soul is to external circumstances, what the builder is to the materials out of which he rears his edifice. The choicest materials may be brought together, gold, marble, and cedar, but unless the builder use them with artistic skill, they will never take the form of a beautiful structure. So the providence of God may gather around man all the

facilities and elements for the raising of a noble character, but unless he use them with his own spiritual hand, he will never produce such a structure. Mark—

Thirdly: *The grand end of true teaching.* What is that? The supreme importance of every man obtaining a true moral character. "Marvel not that I say unto you ye must be born again." In moral goodness of soul alone, can we not only find our heaven, but find our way safely and happily through this life. We live in a world of evil. We cannot escape its damning influence by endeavouring, like the anchorite, to avoid its touch. Whilst no man should put himself in the way of temptation, no man should be afraid to confront evil, to go into its most malarial regions if duty call. In truth, if man's well-being depended upon escaping outward evil, it could never be realised, because to live in the world he is bound to live in its midst, and evil must stream into him every day. How, then, is he to reach a blessed destiny? Not merely by endeavouring to frame his life

according to the outward rules of morality and religion, but by a right use of his own spiritual powers. There is a power in the body, when in a healthy state, to appropriate whatever goes into it from external nature that is wholesome and necessary, and to expel that which is noxious and superfluous. The soul has a power analogous to this: a power to appropriate the wholesome and to expel the injurious. This power we call

the transformative. Let us use it rightly—use it as Noah used it, who, amidst the blasphemy and ridicule of a corrupt generation, walked with God, and fulfilled a noble destiny; as Paul used it at sceptical Athens, in dissolute Corinth, and in Pagan Rome, who from experience left the world this testimony—“All things work together for good to them that love God.” *

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

THE WORTH OF REVERENCE.

“This is the thing which I know, and which, if you labour faithfully, you shall know also, that in reverence is the chief joy and power of life—reverence for what is pure and bright in your own youth, for what is true and tried in the age of others, for all that is gracious among the living, great among the dead, and marvellous in the Powers that cannot die.”

RUSKIN.

* See on this subject a matchless sermon by F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, which I have read after having finished this short sketch.

Seedlings.

A Bad Social State.

"NO MAN CARED FOR MY SOUL."—*Psalm cxlii. 4.*

OBSERVE here—

I.—A WRONG social state. A state of society in which no man cares for another. Each taken up with himself, and none concerned for his neighbours, is manifestly wrong.

First: It is *unnatural*. The constitution of our nature,—endowed as we are with social longings and sympathies, and with faculties suited to render service one to another,—proves the unnaturalness of social indifference. What is morally abnormal is morally wrong.

Secondly: It is *unrelational*. By this I mean it is contrary to the relationship we sustain one to another, and all to God. We are all the offspring of the same common Father, all united by the bonds of consanguinity. The same blood quivers in the veins of each, and all are necessarily dependent on one another. Indifference, therefore, is manifestly wrong.

Thirdly: It is *un-Christian*.

Christ lived and died for our race, and His apostles exhorted us to care for others rather than ourselves. Here is—

II.—A MISERABLE social state. A more pitiable condition one can scarcely imagine than that of a man who feels himself utterly disregarded by his fellow-men, even by those nearest to him in relationship and locality. Though there may be much in a man's temperament, character, and procedure, to alienate him from others,—he may be unsocial, irascible, and grossly immoral,—all this does not justify his fellows for utterly disregarding him. In truth it forms a strong reason why they should be interested in him. "The whole need not a physician." Christ went amongst publicans and sinners. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, you are bound to look after him, whether he be a lamb or a tiger.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

Soul Flight.

“I FLEE UNTO THEE TO HIDE ME.”—*Ps. cxliii. 9.*

THE subject is soul flight—

I.—How? The soul not only can fly, but does fly: of this we are all conscious. On the pinions of thought our souls often fly more swiftly than lightnings to the remotest periods and places. This power of flight is the glory of our nature; it defies granite walls and massive chains and bolts. In an instant it can pass from the most dark and depressing scenes to those of sunshine and rapture, it defies space and time, it can out-wing the lightning flash.

II.—WHITHER? “*I fly unto Thee.*” To Him, the eternal Source of all life, and of all good, we should ever direct our flight. We should fly to Him in all our difficulties in study, for He alone can explain the reason of things; in all our trials in duty, for He alone can give us strength to “labour and to wait;” in all our

anxieties and sorrows, for He alone can sweep the clouds from our horizon, and fill us with the sunshine of joy and hope.

III.—WHY? “*To hide me.*” There is danger. The clouds over us are cradling the thunder-storms and nursing the lightnings. Spiritual enemies, like huntsmen in search of gain, are preparing the weapons to strike us down. Let us flee to Him to shelter us from the tempest, and to guard us from the foe. As the eagle, when beaten down by the tempest, still keeps its wings expanded, watches for the first gleams of sunshine, in order to pierce the clouds and bathe in azure, so let us in all our trials and sorrows direct our flight to Him who can fill us with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.
LONDON.

Man.

“LORD, WHAT IS MAN THAT THOU TAKEST KNOWLEDGE OF HIM, OR THE SON OF MAN THAT THOU MAKEST ACCOUNT OF HIM?”—*Ps. cxliv. 3.*

THIS language may be taken as expressing an intellectual problem, and as implying a religious sentiment.

I.—As EXPRESSING AN INTELLECTUAL PROBLEM—“*What is man?*”

First: What is man in his con-

stitution? What is he *corporeally*? Medical science, from the beginning, has concerned itself with this question, and, as yet, has reached no satisfactory solution. What is he *mentally*? Psychology has pondered on this question for ages, and has not, up to the present hour, reached a satisfactory explanation. What is he *morally*? Ethical science has employed its most earnest efforts in order to find out whether man is a moral being or not, and, if he is, what are his distinguishing faculties, and what his ultimate destiny.

Secondly: What is man in his *relations*? His relations to the material and the spiritual, the human and the Divine.

Thirdly: What is man in his *character*? Has he fallen from a higher type of character, or is he gradually rising out of a lower? Is his moral character a progressive evolution? Here is the problem, "*What is man?*" "Truly," says *Sir Thomas Browne*, "the whole creation is a mystery, and particularly that of man." "Man," says *Carlyle*, "stands in the centre of nature, his fraction of time encircled by eternity, his handbreadth of space encircled by infinitude."

"How poor, how rich, how abject,
how august,
How complicate, how wonderful is
man!
How passing wonder He who made
him such!

Who centred in our make such
strange extremes,
From different natures marvellously
mix'd,
Connection exquisite of distant
worlds!
Distinguish'd link in being's endless
chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied, and
absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonor'd, still
Divine!
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory, a frail child of
dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm!—a God!"—*Young*.

The verse may be taken

II.—AS IMPLYING A RELIGIOUS
SENTIMENT. "*Lord, what is man
that Thou takest knowledge of
him?*"

First: The exclamation *assumes* that the Almighty does take special notice of man. The Infinite does not ignore him, though he is nothing as compared with Him. In being he is as nothing, and in character repugnant, yet he is noticed. The shepherd is interested in his one lost sheep. The housewife in her one lost piece of silver. The father in his one lost son.

Secondly: The exclamation *breathes the spirit of amazement at this*. It is so contrary to what might antecedently have been expected, so contrary to what a guilty conscience would have foreboded.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

The Divine Ways.

"THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS IN ALL HIS WAYS."—*Ps. cxlv. 17.*

I.—God has many ways of DEALING WITH HIS UNIVERSE. God's ways are His methods of action.

First: He has settled methods of action in relation to His *inanimate* universe. He has a way of managing the seas, and the stars, and all the blind forces of nature.

Secondly: He has settled methods of action in relation to His *sentient* universe. The smallest insect and the hugest mammoth he manages by their instincts.

Thirdly: He has settled methods of action in relation to His *moral* universe. (1) With the *unfallen*. The myriads who retain their pristine virtues. (2) With the *fallen*. These include the impenitent and the repentant. He has methods of dealing with them, they are settled and unalterable.

II.—In all God's ways He is

ABSOLUTELY RIGHTEOUS. "*The Lord is righteous in all His ways.*"

First: This is a matter of *necessity*. He could not but be righteous: whatever He does must be right because He does it, for there is nothing higher than Himself, nothing outside of Himself. He is absolutely irresponsible. What the infinitely wise, holy, and loving does, must be "*righteous.*"

Secondly: This is a matter for *rejoicing*. How blessed the thought that He, with whom we have to do, on whom we are absolutely dependent, to whom we are amenable for all our conduct, and who will settle our destiny at last, will never do us wrong, will always act righteously.

Moral—Trust in Him.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

Days of the Christian Year.

Matt. viii. 24.

(*Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.*)

(THE GOSPEL.)

"BUT HE WAS ASLEEP."

WE have here—

I.—THE SON OF MAN ASLEEP IN THE HOUR OF HIS OWN BODILY WEARINESS. A long and hard day's work had the Master had

that day. He had *thought* much that day, thinking out some of the most striking of His parables (Luke viii. 4-18). He had *taught* much that day, delivering these parables, giving private explanations of them, receiving enquirers: He had *wrought* much that day

(verses 5-16). He had taxed and spent His strength. To Him, to speak truth and to heal disease was no mere mechanical activity; it was the outgoing of spiritual energy, the expenditure of the forces of His nature: and being wearied with His Father's work, God "gave to His beloved sleep." He slept through all the tumult of the elements the profound sleep of *exhaustion* that demanded rest, and of *piety* that trusted itself wholly to the care of the Heavenly Father. This sleep of Christ in the day-time points to (a) *the devoted diligence of His life*; we may gather that this was so from two things; from (1) the magnitude of the work He accomplished in the time during which He wrought it. In less than three years, speaking the truth and living the life on which the human race has been ever since, and will always be maintained; and from (2) the record we have of His doings: these brief Gospel sketches indicate the seriousness and even the severity of His labours, as He went about doing good to the bodies and the souls of men. (b) *The generous impulse which He allowed Himself in His life.* His life was not without plan and method, but He permitted Himself to be guided in His course by the attitude of others. On this occasion He allowed Himself to

be beset by a necessitous and exacting multitude, and to be so moved by their urgency and persistency that He became entirely exhausted, and was fain to sleep at an hour when all the others were alive with eagerness and alarm. He left room for the play of generous impulse. So also may we in the ordering of our own life, and in the judgment we form of others who, in this respect also, are followers of the Master. (c) *Of the thoroughness of His humanity.* In this incident we have a signal proof that this was none other than the very Son of God, and also the very Son of Man. "What manner of man is this whom the winds and the waves obey?" and *this* who sleeps on, unconscious of the beating rain, and of the roaring wind, and of the waves that wash over the heaving vessel?

II.—THE MASTER ASLEEP IN THE HOUR OF THE DISCIPLES' DANGER. Christ sleeping in the storm which threatened to overwhelm them! It must have looked like negligence. *It did* (Mark iv. 38). But everything was right, was better than if it had happened otherwise, resulted in lessons and influences which would not have been gained by the most apparent watchfulness.

How many times since then has the Church, or the family, or

the individual man been in peril and distress, have wreck and ruin been imminent, when the Divine Lord has seemed to be negligent of His own. But the negligence has only been apparent. Christ has been there, ready to interpose and to rescue when the true moment comes.

When storm-time arrives, when "*cares*, like a wild deluge, come, or storms of *sorrow* fall," or when the sense of sin and the fear of retribution beset and afflict the soul, then should we make instant, earnest, importunate appeal to that Saviour who can speak peace to stronger elements than wind and wave, and soon shall there be a "great calm." And *what* a calm is that! Surely the stillest lake compared with the most tempestuous ocean is but a feeble picture of the stillness of soul after the agitations of a sin-troubled heart. O blessed restfulness of heart, when there is peace with God, with our own self, with the world around. Whatever God denies our dear ones, may He give them that. With whatever we can dispense, we cannot afford to do without that. Whatsoever things we leave others to pursue, let us strive after that, and give ourselves no rest until we have attained it. Rich in every earthly blessing, in every human joy, without that we

are poor indeed. Blessed are the eyes which see that beckoning Hand, the ears which hear that inviting Voice,—the hand and the voice of Him who still stands and cries, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.
BRISTOL.

Romans xiii. 1-7.

(Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.)

(THE EPISTLE.)

THE CHRISTIAN'S POLITICAL RELATIONS.

"LET EVERY SOUL BE SUBJECT TO THE HIGHER POWERS. FOR THERE IS NO POWER BUT OF GOD: THE POWERS THAT BE ARE ORDAINED OF GOD," &c.

THE perplexing relations in which Roman Christians stood to the Government, drew from St. Paul a statement of the duties which all Christians owe to every upright and justly constituted civil authority.

This statement we propose, briefly, to expound; and notice—

L—THE ORIGIN AND NEED OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT. "There is no power but of God." As to the magistrate, the apostle says, "he is a minister of God, an

avenger of wrath to him that doeth evil." If "the powers that be" (civil government), "are ordained of God," we infer that civil society itself, is ordained of God. This will be manifest when we consider—1. *Man's natural impulses for society.* The instincts of our nature dispose us to live in society, and to seek sympathy and assistance from others. Instinctively we form friendships and attachments, and seek the society of those we love. Families naturally cling together, from the love of parents to children, and of children to parents, and of children to each other. And "solitary confinement" is one of the most terrible punishments which can be inflicted on any rational human being 2. *Man's natural position and circumstances.* By means of society, not only is the race preserved, but civilization is developed. If human beings were completely isolated, not only would the race degenerate, but must certainly and speedily become extinct. Man is formed for society, and such are his position and circumstances, that society is a necessity of his being. Man needs protection from the elements above, and from the lower animals around him. He needs the aid of civil authority to protect his life and property from the malice and power of the evilly-disposed

among his fellow men. Further let us consider—

II.—THE OBLIGATION OF OBEDIENCE TO CIVIL AUTHORITY.

"We must needs be in subjection, not only because of wrath," &c. We need surely no argument to prove that man is a being endowed with a conscience—a sense of right and wrong; or that he was endowed with an understanding, enabling him to perceive that there is such a thing as duty devolving upon him. In civil society laws are enacted and governments appointed to enforce the *right* and put down the *wrong*. And all rightly disposed persons willingly subject themselves to this authority. This must needs be—

1. *As a matter of duty, not of fear only.* The fear of punishment is a natural check upon evil-doers, and thus, in a measure, it prevents lawlessness. With evil-doers obedience is a matter of compulsion or of expediency. There is another standard, that of duty, which some take who are not disposed to admit that "the powers that be are ordained of God." There are atheists who profess to render obedience to the civil authority, not from fear of the penalties, but as a matter of duty. The Christian does this; but he takes a far higher standard also. He obeys— 2. *As a matter of conscience towards God.* There

is something higher even than duty, *i.e.*, love. Love to God prompts obedience to His commands,—His “ordinances.” We own that no human government is infallible. But the Christian, from love and conscience towards God, yields a cheerful obedience to “the powers that be,” so long as the civil laws do not conflict with the Divine laws, nor demand disobedience to the revealed will of God.

We know that God only is Lord of the conscience. But as “all power is from Him,” and “by Him kings reign,” we are bound, as God’s creatures, as followers of Jesus, to whom “all power is given in heaven and in earth,” to render to “the powers that be” a willing obedience for conscience sake. “This is, indeed,” says Archbishop Leighton, “the philosopher’s stone, turning actions of lower metal into gold.” Another important thought is presented in this passage:—

III.—THE DUTY OF REVERENCE TO OFFICIAL DIGNITY. “Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute . . . honour to whom honour.” The natural capacities of men are very various. Some have wonderful powers of organization, discipline, and control. Some are born teachers; some are born to rule. Others shine best in serving and obeying. But upon

all subjects devolves the common duty to “fear God and honour the king.” A cheerful and respectful obedience is the best proof of our reverence. The apostle, referring especially to the civil magistracy, says, “Render to all men what is due.” Then he particularizes— 1. *As to our dues to the public revenue.* “Tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom.” The language implies that we are not to regard the levied rates as *gifts* to the government, but as *debts*. 2. *As to our respect for official distinction.* “Fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.” The language of St. Paul in this place is confirmed by St. Peter in his second epistle (ii. 10), and also by St. Jude. To “despise authority” and to “rail at dignities” is utterly inconsistent with the true Christian character. As in the order of nature the capacities and talents of men are varied, and as some are peculiarly endowed with powers for filling the high offices of civil authority, if we are to “render to all their dues,” then surely are we bound to render due reverence to these. In all society and in all government we shall find matters that are not exactly agreeable to our own ideas. But we must remember that the very basis of all society is mutual forbearance and mutual self-sacrifice, for mutual

benefit. Our dislikes, then, should not prevent us from rendering due reverence to official dignity, as well as to rank, talent, and all true worth. The whole of the apostle's teaching on this subject shows that we are bound to render obedience and reverence to the government and its authorities, on the ground that it is an "ordinance of God." But this implies that the government shall not enact, nor its authorities seek to enforce, anything that would require disobedience to the will of God. Hence we conclude—

1. That this precludes all illegal action against government on the part of Christians.
2. That it permits all legal means for the redress of any real injustice.
3. That "the obligation of obedience is ever dependent on the righteousness of the command." *

JOHN W. KAYE, M.A.
ENNISKILLEN.

Matt. xxiv. 23-31.

(Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.)

CHRIST had spoken of the doom which He foresaw was coming upon Jerusalem for its moral blindness and hardness of heart. "Not one stone shall be left upon another." Its day of light would

soon end, and a terrible darkness would gather around it. The disciples, awed and impressed with Christ's prediction, drew near to Him, and asked when the overshadowing judgment would burst upon the nation, and what would be the sign of its coming. They were eager to know. There was much prejudice and self-seeking blended with their desire to know when and how the end of that age would take place. They were throwing their minds forward to the power, and rank, and glory, which they hoped would be given to them at the coming of the Son of Man, and in the kingdom which He would establish. Christ does not satisfy their curiosity and ambition. He tells them much, but He does not tell them what they so eagerly longed to know. As a wise and loving Teacher He did not directly combat the narrow, ambitious ideas and aims that were in their minds, but He spoke to them, in a fresh strain, of His coming, and gave them larger and deeper conceptions of it.

I.—THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IS NOT FULFILLED BY REVOLUTIONARY AGITATION. "If any man shall say unto you, Lo! here is the Christ, or, there; believe it not: for there shall arise false Christs!" In the

* See *Homilist*, New Series, March, 1859.

closing years of the Jewish nation men arose claiming to be Christs. The hope of a Messiah who would restore the nation to its old might and greatness was cherished in almost every heart; and men arose under the influence of this widespread and intense national hope, and proclaimed themselves Christs, by whom God would deliver and save His people. It was a time of delusion and misguided enthusiasm. Many of these false Messiahs were not so much imposters as men wrought up to fanaticism by their wild dreams and visions of freedom. Roman tyranny and outrage crushed the nation. Roman governors sat in the judgment halls; Roman soldiers filled the cities and provinces; Roman officials levied the taxes; Roman coins circulated in the markets. To overthrow the Roman lordship, with its cruelty and wrong, was the aim of the leaders of revolution and the hosts that followed them. But not in such movements was there the coming of the Son of Man. The advent of Christ and the kingdom of Christ is something more than an outward change in human life. Outward revolution will do but little of itself to bring peace and happiness and rest to men. New forms of tyranny, and poverty, and suffering, and wrong, will

spring up out of the ruins of the old. Men expect the regeneration of the world from political governments, and the overthrow of old and outworn systems of despotism. But no! The man himself must become renewed. The kingdom of God spreads from within a man's own character outward to society. Revolutions! Agitations! Measures! Do not hope too much from these. If the Roman mastery be abolished, some new mastery will come in its place, unless men are themselves new creatures in Christ Jesus.

II.—THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IS NOT A NARROW, LOCAL EVENT. "As the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." It is not in one nation alone, or in one age alone, or in one event alone, that Christ comes. He is always coming, and coming in all nations, and all ages, and all events. He is universal as the light. The whole history of the world is one unceasing moral progress: one unceasing advent of Christ. Do not try to localise the work of Christ. Do not narrow it to special times and events. In the Churches and outside all Churches, in Christian literature and in all other literature, on Sundays and on week-

days, among the rich and among the poor, in the aims and enterprises of men, in legislation, in commerce, in society, Christ is ever coming. Sometimes slowly—too slowly it may be for our impatient hearts—yet unrestingly, truth, and right, and love, grow and spread in the world, as the light dawning in the east sweeps onward to the west, conquering the darkness and driving it away.

III.—THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IS SEEN IN DIVINE JUDGMENTS. "Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together." In the East, when a beast of burden sinks down on the highway, or a dead body lies exposed, the vulture's keen eye detects the motionless thing, and, like a stone, he drops down upon his prey. So where there is moral corruption, there speedily comes destruction swooping down upon it. Jerusalem, full of bigotry, hating the true light, Rome, the centre of licentious luxury, steeped in impurity, were by a wise, just judgment, destroyed. It is necessary that states and systems that are morally dead, and that breed pollution and pestilence in the earth, should be swept away to make room for things of life and sweetness. The destructive work of judgment prepares the way for the con-

structive work of truth and grace. After the overthrow of the reign of mammon, and vice, and passion, there is room for the kingdom of Christ. Do not give way to pity over the waste and desolation wrought by judgment. It is a false pity. The stroke of justice was an act of mercy to the rest of the world. The time had come for the vultures to gather and make an end of the foulness and death. God is long-suffering as long as there is any chance of change left in a corrupt people or age, but when it becomes like a carcase on the face of the earth, polluting it, and propagating disease, arresting the progress of the world, then the swift, stern gathering of the birds of prey is righteous and necessary. A new and better time will dawn, the coming of the Son of Man.

Hope on. Christ is the King of men, and His reign on earth is ever widening. He is ever victorious. Day-by-day there is a new advent of His truth and spirit in the world.

THOMAS HAMMOND.

BRISTOL.

Romans ii. 1-11.

(Sexagesima Sunday.)

"THEREFORE THOU ART INEXCUSABLE, O MAN, WHOSOEVER THOU ART THAT JUDGEST ; FOR WHEREIN THOU JUDGEST ANOTHER THOU CONDEMNEST THYSELF ; FOR THOU THAT JUDGEST DOEST THE SAME THINGS," &c., &c.

THESE verses, I think, will teach some of the lessons intended, if we see here HUMAN JUDGMENTS REBUKED ; DIVINE JUDGMENT EXALTED.

I.—HUMAN JUDGMENT IS PRO-
NOUNCED BY INCONSISTENT MEN.
The men who judge, often those who judge most sternly, are themselves guilty. David and Nathan. The accusers and the woman taken in adultery. In the light of the Sermon on the Mount we are all inconsistent.

II.—DIVINE JUDGMENT IS PRO-
NOUNCED BY A PERFECTLY
RIGHTEOUS BEING. We notice (1) The standard by which God judges—*Truth* ; (2) The spirit in which God judges—His judgment is (i.) *Longsuffering* ; (ii.) *Impartial* ; (iii.) *Thorough*. The character of the Divine Judge is, First : *an inspiration* to those who seek well-doing. Second : *a terror* to those who obey unrighteousness.

EDITOR.

Romans viii. 14-18.

(Quinquagesima Sunday.)

"FOR AS MANY AS ARE LED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD. FOR YE HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE AGAIN TO FEAR ; BUT YE HAVE RECEIVED THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, WHEREBY WE CRY, ABBA, FATHER. THE SPIRIT ITSELF BEARETH WITNESS WITH OUR SPIRIT, THAT WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF GOD : AND IF CHILDREN, THEN HEIRS ; HEIRS OF GOD, AND JOINT-HEIRS WITH CHRIST," &c., &c.

We notice—

I.—THE CONDITION ON WHICH WE ARE "SONS OF GOD." *Not mere creatureship*. The stars, the birds, the flowers, are God's creatures. *Not mere resemblance*. Even fallen men are made in the image of God, and have a potential likeness to Him. *But filial disposition*. Men are the special creation of God ; may have a special resemblance to Him ; may have affection, not fear ; may cry "Abba, Father."

II.—THE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE "SONS OF GOD." (1) There is the *witness of God's Spirit* ; (2) There is the *testimony of the spirit of man*.

III.—THE RESULTS OF OUR BEING "SONS OF GOD." (1) We are *heirs of God* ; (2) We are *joint-heirs with Christ*. EDITOR.

Breviaries.

A Plausible Temptation.

"IT IS TOO MUCH FOR YOU TO GO UP TO JERUSALEM."—1 *Kings* xii. 28

THERE is a principle in these words which is evil, seductive, and prevalent. It is the suggestion that some duty is too hard, too irksome, beyond what is required if not beyond what is possible. I.—WHAT ARE THE MODERN INSTANCES OF THIS TEMPTATION BEING YIELDED TO? (1) Reducing to lowest standard *the attendances on the ordinances of Religion*. Half-time worshippers. (2) Reducing to lowest level *the claims for sacrifice*. (3) Reducing to lowest *test our customary morals*. II.—WHAT IS THE GUILT IN YIELDING TO THESE TEMPTATIONS? (1) *Ingratitude to God*. (2) *Cherishing the spirit of expediency*. (3) *Repression of all best enthusiasms of our nature*. III.—WHAT ARE THE EVIL RESULTS OF YIELDING TO THIS TEMPTATION? (1) *Ruin* to others. The consequence in Jeroboam's days was that soon national unity was gone, and religious unity. This spirit prepared the way for the worship of Ashtaroath and Baal. So church unity, all commonwealth suffers. (2) *Ruin* to self. Where the gift is deliberately less than we know it ought to be, the work deliberately more scanty, the life deliberately lower, the man becomes mean, emasculated, self-despised. EDITOR.

The Source and Channel of Gospel Blessings.

"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST," &c.
—*Ephesians* i. 3.

ONE of the distinguishing glories of Christianity is that it is a religion of facts. These facts reveal the principles of Christianity, and the principles of Christianity reveal the character of God and His method of saving man. Learn from the text—I.—THE ULTIMATE SOURCE of Gospel blessings. "God." A Source (1) *Adequate* (a) in intelligence. (b) In heart. (c) In power. (2) *Sympathetic* "Father." The Fatherhood of

God, and the Sonship, both of the Redeemer and the redeemed, are doctrines which should be held with a grip of steel in this age of rationalistic audacity and loose thinking. (3) *Thankworthy*. "Blessed be the God, and Father," &c. The Greek *ευλογητός* rendered "blessed" here, literally means "worthy of praise, or worthy of all praise." Gratitude to God is seemly. II.—THE CHARACTERISTICS of Gospel blessings. (1) *Their nature*. "Spiritual blessings." (2) *Their quantity*. "All spiritual blessings." The word *πάση*, rendered "all," by inspiration includes the thought of "every." (3) *Their sphere*. "In heavenly places." It means that there is a style of life that leads right into the midst of "spiritual" light, and Holy Ghost inspirations. That the Christian comes to "heavenly places" before he reaches Heaven. It means that the path of duty leads right through "heavenly places," where all spiritual blessings are within reach of our appropriating hand. *Lessons*.—(1) If the path of duty leads through "heavenly places," and within reach of "all spiritual blessings," *are we in that path?* (2) If so, the text is appropriate:—"Blessed be the God and Father," &c.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

THOMAS KELLY.

The "I Wills" of Christ.

"I WILL."—*Mark* i. 41. "I WILL."—*John* xvii. 24.

THIS is the same word though used in such different places, circumstances, and, it may be, tones. It is a calm, intense, majestic word on the lips of Christ, and so heard it is— I.—An indication of INTEREST. The will is dependent on knowledge and emotion. Christ knows and cares about the leper, and about His disciples. Hence each of these "I wills." They reveal, so far, the *Heart* of God. II.—An indication of PURPOSE. There may be interest without will: *e.g.*, mere sentiment or bewilderment. But here is distinct, definite purpose. This is a revelation of the *Mind* of God. III.—An indication of POWER. Rightly the leper said to Christ, "If *Thou* wilt, *Thou* canst." Which is the mightier, the "I will" of Christ's prayer or of His miracle? This a revelation of the *Arm* of God.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

* The Broader Congregationalism.

WHETHER the Broader Congregationalism (for of this I would venture to speak from the chair to which you have so kindly called me) floats only in men's imagination, or whether it exists in some degree in actual fact, I do not think is the chief question to ask about it. I believe, if it be a dream, it is a dream of a possible good; or that if it already has an existence anywhere, it might be profitable for the ministers and delegates of the hundred or so Churches in our Union to consider whether all such Churches might not well cultivate somewhat of the spirit, and wisely adopt many of the methods of what, for want of a better name, I am thus calling the Broader Congregationalism. I am justified in this description of it because—

IT IS DISTINGUISHED BY BREADTH IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER CHURCHES. The narrower Congregationalism cares only for its own one congregation; or, at best only for other congregations of its own denomination. Now, in the first case it matters not how elegant the structure, how crowded the assemblies, how exquisite the singing, how eloquent the preaching, how numerous, and cultured, and comfortable the membership; if there is no consideration of, or contribution to, or prayer for the Congregational Churches in the poorer neighbourhoods of our great cities, or up and down the rural districts of our country, this Congregationalism is a narrow, mean, selfish, and what the Romans would scornfully have called, a provincial thing. And, in the second case it matters not how vigorous in many ways a church may be, if it has no fellowship with the spirit, and, I will add, with the work of churches of other communions; if its life is a life of jealousy, or of rivalry, or even of isolation, as far as other denominations are concerned, then the Congregationalism represented thus, is a narrow, mean, sectarian, and, what we may truly call, a schismatic thing. The Broader Congregationalism denounces and disowns selfishness in churches as emphatically as in individuals. It believes the principle to apply to a church as well as to a man, that "he that will save his soul shall lose it," and that a church that supremely searches for, and cares concerning its own life, will inevitably ensure its own death.

**An Address delivered to the Annual Assembly, by the REV. URIJAH R. THOMAS, Chairman of the Congregational Union of Gloucestershire and Herefordshire.*

Such a church's passion for its own private progress is an inspiration rather from the dark, yawning hells of selfishness, than from the bright and broad heavens of love.

We cannot too strongly insist on breadth in our relationship to other churches, whether of our own "faith and order," or of other Communion. We are here this morning—our Union exists—our Church-Aid Society is struggling through its infant life, in order that Congregationalism may fulfil some of its duties to its own poorer churches, and to its own underpaid—may I not say shamefully underpaid, ministers. And is there not a cause? Looking at the incomes of ministers in our churches now, there are four counties in which the average income of pastors of aided churches does not reach £80 a year, and there are nineteen counties in which it is below £100. And what does this mean? I will quote, not from any diary of our own ministers—many, I have no doubt, might be found written with a trembling hand on a tear-blotted page—not from any official document of our Society; but I will cite a few sentences from the esteemed and thoughtful vicar of the parish* in which we are met to-day, for what he says of his fellow-ministers will largely apply to ours—"The sad fact is that there are hundreds upon hundreds engaged in this holy service who are dragging wearily and painfully through life, ground to the earth by the cares of abject poverty. The cases are numerous indeed, in which a young man has accepted the office and stipend of a curate, and after a certain period of waiting and probation, has contracted marriage, imprudently it may be said, but with hope in his heart, and trust in God, which whatever may have happened, we will not dare to say was misplaced: and the years have proceeded, and his work has been done, as far as his power lay, with constant strain of thought, and through many difficulties and anxieties, and, perhaps, with little appreciation and a good deal of carping criticism; but all this time there has been gathering upon him a load of care, ever growing weightier and more portentous because of the wants of those who now look to him for support; and the means at his disposal are only the same as when they just met his own necessities. The same pitiful £80 or £100 a year; and that train of humbling and dejecting things—the shifts and devices to keep up a decent appearance—the stinting of necessary food, that pity of the world which is so nearly allied with contempt; and, perhaps, hardest of all, the cruel necessity to apply to one of those benevolent societies which furnish to the indigent clergy crumbs from the tables, and cast-off clothes from the wardrobes of

* Rev. David Wright, St. Mary's, Stoke Bishop.

the rich. Brethren, we exaggerate nothing. The papers of 'The Friend of the Clergy Corporation,' and other kindred associations, will tell you in detail, and in multifold instances that which we have only roughly and generally stated. And you will remember that the man who is tried and jaded in this way, may not retire from observation and hide in some welcome concealment his trouble and his shame. He must be at the call of those who want their sorrows lightened, and their cares relieved; and he must come before the congregation from Sunday to Sunday, and minister at the altar of God with an unclouded brow, and rise up and tell the people of the Divine and Spiritual things which he has been thinking out the week before, as best he could, in the midst of the distractions of his suffering life; and there are generally some who, when the services are over, will rise from their posture of languid repose, and call these compositions poor,—and no wonder if they are." Whatever may be the causes for this in the Church of England, amongst us this state of things arises—sometimes from the actual meanness of the churches themselves, from what, in rough contrast to St. Paul's eulogy of the "liberality of the saints," we must call the stinginess of the saints,—and sometimes from the parsimonious views, or business incompetency, or official lethargy of the deacons. But, very often it results from the poverty of the churches. Up to their measure, yes, and beyond their measure, many of such people are generous and liberal to a degree that would at once surprise and shame many of the wealthier members of some city churches. To overtake such a need, the practical assistance of every member of all our confederated churches is claimed.

And, is it out of place to utter a word or two about breadth in our relationship to the churches of the different denominations. We are nobly taught by the chief of the apostles to "add to our brotherly kindness, charity." This wider love will alone, but will infallibly, lead us into a right attitude to the Church Catholic.

There is, happily, scarcely need for a sentence in this direction as regards our dealings with the Free Churches. In such matters as uniting in their services, preaching in their pulpits, contributing to their enterprises, it is as natural for Congregationalists to be large-hearted to all the Free Churches as it is for the lark to sing, or for the eagle to soar. We take no credit for it; we see no virtue in it;—it is the unconscious habit of our everyday life.

In other directions there is more difficulty; but we may well let it be their fault, not ours, if the Church of England clergymen of our several

localities do not find in us their willing fellow-labourers, in the name of our God and His Christ; fellow-labourers, willing to be led by them, when, from any good reason, they are the natural leaders; willing to work by their side when fraternity in any useful, holy enterprise is possible. Moreover, when, as in instances that are too common, the neighbouring clergyman is such a priestling that, on grounds of Sacerdotalism, or such a prig that, on grounds of social superiority, he avoids us, or meets us with an averted nod, or a patronising touch of the tip of his fingers, we will still rejoice that there are hundreds of his fellow-clergy of a better mind, and of a nobler make, and we will take care that so far as these, our unneighbourly neighbours are concerned, prayer for deliverance from “malice, and all uncharitableness,” shall be a more fitting prayer for them than for us.

As pursuing this subject still further I have great satisfaction in quoting the words of one of the most honoured of the past Chairmen of this Union,—those of the late Rev. David Thomas, B.A., of Highbury Chapel, Bristol:—“If I see a man showing the Spirit of Christ—living a true, Christian life—holy, righteous, loving God and showing it by reverence for, conformity to, hope in Him, and showing his love to men by devotion to their welfare, I must reckon him as a brother. He may be a member of the Romish Church, holding all her superstitions, and zealous for them; or he may belong to some extravagant sect of the Protestant Church, believing absurd or unintelligible things; or he may not be a member of any sect of the Church,—full of perplexity about many things, with dark tints and fogs in his creed, not in a safe theological position at all. But if I find him a God-loving, God-fearing man, just, pure in spirit and life, I am bound to call him brother whatever name he bear,—to call him brother because he bears no other name;—God is in that righteousness, that holiness, that love. I see God there. Oh, when you see such a man, call him brother. Don’t be afraid of what he shall be hereafter. Receive him into fellowship. That spirit should open the door of every church—of every heart to him. This is what I am most anxious about—the assurance that the Divine Spirit is there.”

It seems natural now to pass on to speak of the Congregationalism—

THAT IS DISTINGUISHED BY BREADTH IN REGARD TO THE TRUTH IT TREASURES AND TEACHES. We are one here, this morning, in our hope, prayer, resolve, that we, as Congregational Churches, may never relax our faith in The Living Christ, “Who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification,” and may never wane but rather wax in the ardour of

loyalty, and of worship to The Loving Christ, whom now and here, before one another and under His eye, we pledge ourselves afresh to preach, and variously set forth, in His saving relationship to the social habits, the commercial life, the political affairs, as well as to the individual sins and sorrows of all generations and all races of men. We are one towards Christ, if we are not one towards creeds.

We are not one towards creeds,—not one in our belief in the wisdom of stereotyping human opinions about truth, lest, perchance, there should be hereafter a slavery to formulæ; lest, perchance, there should be the despotism of the dead hand of human nomenclature, and authoritative Articles, and requirements of Trust Deeds, rather than the dominion of the living hand of Christ, whose touch may yet have revelations for men's blindness, and healing for men's sinfulness beyond all that our ancestors—however pious and however learned—ever dreamed; or, rather, for the word dreamed may seem too prophetic for some of them, beyond all they ever argued out. Hence the Congregationalism of which I speak freely, this morning, utterly repudiates and throws away such a name as that of Calvinistic Independent, however honoured the brother may be who told a Vice Chancellor, the other day, he considered that was our name. We repudiate it as a designation; for even more strongly than we refuse to be named after any one Christian ceremony—as Baptists or Lord's Supperists—do we refuse to be named after any one great expounder of Christ's Truth, or worker in Christ's vineyard, whether he be Wesley or Luther, Swedenborg or Calvin. Moreover, Calvin is not the representative of the Broader Congregationalism. For, whatever may have seemed to some of us to be the error and the evil of passing the Union Resolutions, of 1878, in affirmation of the current creed of Congregational Churches, there is reason for rejoicing that they were, so far, not according to Calvin, that they affirmed nothing about the terrible theme of Eternal Future Punishment; and that, therefore, the Congregational Union of England and Wales itself has implicitly declared that there is a place in Congregationalism alike for those who are, by their convictions, compelled to hold the dreary, dark, heart-breaking anticipation of the endless existence of evil in the universe of God; or for those who, by their doctrine of immortality in Christ only, foresee a survival of the fittest and a literal perishing of all else; or, for those who hope that the prediction of the "times of the restitution of all things" means, that an age, however distant, will yet dawn, in which God in Christ will completely put down all enemies, recovering every conscience to duty, every intellect to truth,

every heart to love. There being this latitude in such Articles of the Creed of Congregationalism as refer to Future Punishment, and much similar latitude in many other directions, may it not be well for the matter of our Trust Deeds, new and old, to be Christianly, which is always honestly and bravely considered. We may well rejoice that the questions arising from our Chapel Trust Deeds—as in the recent Huddersfield case—do not touch the great matter of a man's right to be a Minister of Christ, or even a Congregational Minister. Herein lies a great difference between our standing with regard to Law Courts and that of Ministers of the Church of England. Even when our ecclesiastical matters get into such Courts, the only question arising concerns the uses of property that is in trust. It is only a matter of our relationship to bricks and mortar, timber and slates, and sometimes (and the less frequently the better) to some slender endowment. In our case it is impossible for the Law to touch, what we insist nothing but the Church of Christ itself has a right to handle—the sanctities of a man's right to teach and preach the Gospel. Wherever it becomes clear to a Minister, or to his congregation—or to one or the other—that they are not carrying out the intentions of a Trust under which they are using any property, it must be a simple duty—however difficult—either to get the Trusts legally amended, or at once to forego the use of such property, and to let it pass, as soon as maybe, to the uses for which its donors intended it; and, when the Law intervenes, and compels what may not have been seen to be this duty before, nothing very wonderful has happened. But, on the other hand, ought not all new Trust Deeds to be so framed, and any opportunity arising for renewing old Trust Deeds, to be similarly utilized, that their doctrinal provisions should be of the widest possible range, so as to ensure the uses of the conveyed property by all those whose Congregationalism, while it may or may not be the Congregationalism of Calvin, is, as we would that all ours should be, the Congregationalism of Christ and for Christ. It is surely well, if our common theory of a Congregational Church be accurate, that, as far as it is possible, the Church of Christ from generation to generation, should have the responsibilities and the rights which the indwelling Spirit of its great Lord devolves upon it, and confers and qualifies it to exercise. Responsibilities and rights these are, that must stand in some relationship to the sanctified intellect, the inspired conscience, the providential circumstances of the living present. The preceding age may no more deprive the Church of its rights than it can relieve it of its responsibilities.

This leads me, naturally, to notice that the Congregationalism, of which I speak,

IS DISTINGUISHED BY BREADTH IN ITS OWN CONSTITUTION AND ORGANISATION. To every member in our churches there should accrue his share in the control and in the labours of the church. The precise way in which our religious democracy—for such Congregationalism is—should exercise its control may not be easily decided. In different districts the methods may differ. But whether it be by a periodical election of a proportionate number of deacons, or, if thought better, of a larger number of the church, as a sort of governing council, to either of which bodies, with the minister as president, the control of all ordinary affairs should be relegated, or whether it be by putting as largely as possible the management in the hands of meetings of church members, the church should, directly or indirectly, have its voice and its vote in all its enterprises and crises. The deacons are reponsible to the church as its executive; yet, how frequently, instead of being the administrators, they become, not more by their own seeking than by the church's apathy and neglect, the rulers of the church. Or often outside the diaconate the control of the church practically passes into the hands of a few—a few of whom I will use no harsh word, for they often are those who care most for the success of the church—but a few who crystallise into a clique; and so the church becomes disesteemed by others, and eventually depreciated by itself. This matter, it seems to me, presses in many of our churches as one of great practical importance. For the apostolic ideal of a church is not of a body controlled by any member, or group of members—whatever their official designation may be—bishops, priests, ministers, presbyters, deacons, elders, or what not—but of a body where all authority resides in Christ, its great Head, and is by Him exercised throughout the whole organism, because, as St. Paul puts it, from Christ, as Head, the church derives its vitality; and to Him it owes its unity, “being supplied with nourishment, and knit together in one by means of the several joints and attachments, so that it grows with a growth which comes from God Himself.” Quite in closest connection with what I have said about the power of the church resting thus on the broadest basis, would be some suggestions on the necessity of all our denominational organisations being subject to the completest control of their supporting churches. To-day, for the first time, we, as a local Union, are in an assembly popularly constituted by a system of church delegates, and we are about to elect our committees (and I venture to hope in time it will be so with

all our officers) by a far more representative vote than has obtained hitherto. We are thus aiming at breadth and reality in election. What is wise and well here, is not less so in our larger Union, and would be emphatically wise and well with regard to our London Missionary Society, and all our great organisations. The Mission House and the Memorial Hall must be diseased excrescences, instead of healthy limbs of the Congregational body, unless such a living relationship is maintained with our churches as secures the constant circulation of fresh blood.

But I pass to notice the correlative of this matter of breadth of power, namely, that all who thus have the right of control, have the responsibility of work. Whether it be in the relationship of churches to great societies, or of individual members to a church, the right and the responsibility go together; dignity and duty are the two sides of the shield, and duty is the golden side. Yet no one who knows our churches can doubt that the question might sadly fall on a very large number whose names are in our church books, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" The proportion of idlers may vary in some of your vineyards; there are more drones in some of your hives than in others. But are there not too many in all? For if a minister is enough of a seer to discern how much unused power there is in the membership of the church, he often has a melancholy vision, as of a wilderness of wasted things. Money, muscle, manhood is wasted, with the wicked wastefulness that is as full of sorrow to the church, as of shame to the individual;—of shame to the individual it unvaryingly is—else what does Jesus teach by the parable of the buried talents? Has not Thomas Carlyle, on one of his finest pages, nobly written what is as true of churches as of any sphere of life,—“Two men I honour and no third;” and when he has described these two, the toilworn craftsman, labouring for the altogether indispensable daily bread, and the thinker who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, the Bread of Life, does he not unanswerably declare, “We must all toil or steal, howsoever we may name our stealing.” If this view of stealing be, as it surely is, warranted by the economics of all social life, how many of our church members ought to come under church discipline, if not to be subject to church exclusion. It may be that some of these moral defaulters who encumber our church roll, and misrepresent the essential genius of the Christian life, which is, unquestionably, thought for others, work for others, life for others, have no right to be in our churches at all. They are spiritually dead; and might well hear the rebuke implied in St. Anthony’s quaint sermon to the fishes. So much for some who are not.

But are there not more?—perhaps more by thousands—who are missing from the great army of the church's toilers (in which all but the sick should be found) either because it has not been an axiom in church membership that every member is called to a distinct, definite labour for the honour of his Great Master, or because the conventional methods of the church's activities have not seemed to present any way of usefulness for which all have felt qualified. Perhaps one, perhaps both reasons exist. So I proceed to notice, lastly—

The Congregationalism we are considering is MARKED BY BREADTH IN THE AIMS AND METHODS OF ITS WORK. One noble characteristic of Congregationalism has ever been its public spirit; its public spirit towards social and political life—for the emancipation of the slave, the removal of unjust Corn Laws, the righteous Reform of the Suffrage, have had no stauncher friends than we. Perhaps, in most localities, it has never failed to evince public spirit with regard to the great catholic religious societies, such as the Bible Society; while in its enthusiasm and liberal contributions for Foreign Missions, it has shown the eye of the seer and the heart of the saint. Nor may mention be omitted of the large accessions from our ranks to various Temperance Societies—accessions that, as I believe, would be greatly augmented if there were some Congregational organization on the lines of the Church of England Temperance Society,—an organization that would unite the abstainer and the non-abstainer in a holy war with intemperance and its foul brood of sin and shame. Still I am compelled to doubt whether, in its every-day work, the scope of its aim has always and everywhere been wide enough, the method of its activities broad enough. Is there not a tendency in it to live too much for the congregation, and not enough for the neighbourhood; or if its spirit has not been thus confined, has not the method of its operations been often arranged as though this had been its spirit? You tell me that everywhere our pulpit has thankfully taken the opportunity of proclaiming Christ's Gospel to all who would come beneath its shadow and sound; you tell me the Sunday School is an almost universal provision of our churches for such children as will attend its instruction. None of us would tolerate in our hearing any disparagement of the Pulpit and the School. But are they our only aggressive weapons? Are they the only systematic agencies we can continuously use for extending the knowledge and the influence of the blessed Redeemer, who will have all men to be saved? Let us by every means in our power maintain and heighten the efficiency of our Pulpit and of our School. But may we not well set ourselves everywhere, as churches, to cultivate a spirit

and to develope a method which, for want of a better word, I will describe as the spirit and method of the parochial system, a system in which each one of our churches shall consider itself responsible for some district, and devote itself earnestly to labour to transform that district,—every man in it, every house in it into the territory of Christ. No words can better indicate what I mean than those in which John Sterling, taking St. Paul as his model for his work in his Sussex parish, says, as many of you will remember, that if the apostle were in his place “It would be no longer from Jerusalem to Damascus, to Arabia, to Derbe, Lystra, Ephesus that he would travel; but each house of his appointed parish would be to him what each of these great cities was,—a place where he would bend his whole being and spend his whole heart for the conversion, purification, elevation of those under his influence. The whole man would be for ever at work for this purpose; head, heart, knowledge, time, body, possessions, all would be directed to this end.”

Now I have no hesitation in saying that however incapable a minister may be of overtaking this lofty ideal, if a whole church girded itself to the work, he and they together might approach it. A church, every one of whose members was, as I have a few moments ago described, charged with the control and weighted with the responsibility of its work, might face with hope this problem of territorial Christian enterprise. The ways of work would be many, some suited to one church, and some to another; some to one locality, and some to another. May I, with the simple desire of rendering to all ministers and delegates here to-day that brotherly service of suggestion that may be one of the main uses of our Union meetings, venture to indicate a few methods of such work of which, in different places, I have intimate knowledge.

(i.) A District Visiting Society, composed of from twenty to thirty members of the church, sets itself to be the almoner of the church's bounty and the bearer of the church's message to every house of the poor—or of those by whom such visits are not felt to be a social intrusion—in its neighbourhood; and this, of course, without the slightest regard to any question of the attendance of the inmates at any given church or chapel. The almsgiving ought to be wise as well as generous; for the poor, whether in village or city, need to learn lessons of thrift and independence: the message of the Gospel ought to be utterly unsectarian, simply bearing to the sick some consolation, to the dying some hope, to the sinner some rebuke or welcome, to the upright some sympathetic encouragement. The annals of the visitors of such a society can tell of not a few drunkards reclaimed, homes made

homely, characters transformed. In a town about twenty miles away, the church has a Book Loan Society, whose books the district visitors circulate. This lending of good books to the better class of the poor fits in with the needs of the rapidly improving education of the English people. In that town there is an instance known to me in which a woman, with tears of thankfulness, told her visitor that as long as ever the book lasted her husband stayed at home of evenings to have it read to him : while in a city district, where there is similar work, I know that the "Life of Sister Dora" awakened an enthusiasm of interest, among men and women, that could not fail to leave refining and ennobling influence.

(ii.) In a village of which I might speak, there is not only a Reading Room but a Free Lending Library of some 500 volumes, and often eighty or ninety books a week freely enter the houses of all classes of the people.

(iii.) Where is the church that could not maintain, through the winter months, as many do, a Cottage Meeting Service, or, as a moderately strong church can easily do, five or six Cottage Meeting Services in contiguous districts,—thus, at once, affording to the members of the church happy opportunities of being heralds of Christ's Gospel, and offering to groups of those who often are not church frequenters the truths of that Gospel in the simplest, homeliest, directest way.

(iv.) To arrest the attention of the crowds that in most of our great thoroughfares heedlessly pass by our sanctuaries, it has been found well to have, after evening worship on Sunday nights, a "Half-Hour Service" in the church, into which, by the invitation of members of the church, many scores of passers by have been brought.

(v.) Those who have the vocal and other needed adaptation for Open-air Preaching will never fail to gather a group of listeners, especially when some few members of the church will form the nucleus of a little out-door congregation, brightly lead the singing, and genially distribute the hymns. Our so-called laymen, who can speak so well at political meetings, might nobly testify for Christ in open-air preaching.

(vi.) In a poor and crowded city district, most useful week-day services are held in the factories and workshops, and the minister and the church members who help him find on every occasion plenty of willing hearers.

(vii.) To arouse the careless in our regular congregations and in the neighbourhood also—for this a church may do by means of thoroughly and wisely prepared and wisely distributed invitations—a Mission Week has, in many instances, been found to be of signal worth. Perhaps this is one the most effectual of modern ways in which a whole church can, from time to

time, gather itself up to fight a true crusade among the surrounding population.

And while the last enterprise or two I am about to mention may be less directly religious in appearance, they are not in fact. For those of you who know what the dull, grey monotony of the life of the average villager is, and what is the prevalent torpor of heart and torpor of mind, which torpor, as the Rev. Charles Stubbs so forcibly says, are two of the devil's best servants in his work of making hundreds of thousands of English labouring men irreligious drunkards, and those who know what is the dreadful dominion of drudgery, dirt, and drink in vast districts of our towns and cities, will be prepared to hail whatever seems to promise innocent brightness, passing touches of refinement, even transient gleams of purer pleasure.

(viii.) One suburban church, that has at a few streets' distance from it a considerable population of this class, sets itself (among a score of Christian enterprises) one evening fortnightly to provide healthy enlivenment for such. Young ladies and gentlemen who are gifted in music, or recitation, or reading, bring their best resources to the recreation of their less fortunate neighbours. Not only do they give the allotted evening, but, what is of almost equal importance, they visit the people's homes with invitations, and thus two or three good ends are effected. In the first place, many of the younger attendants at our churches, who would not, and who, perhaps, ought not to, give themselves to a more directly religious work (and all of us, probably, have groups of such) are led to gentle care for, and kindly contact with, the poor, and to unselfish use of their powers and time. Then, the caste feeling that is one of the threatening perils of English Society, gets toned down; and, then almost for nothing (a penny is charged for admission) hundreds enjoy the proceedings, and the influences, and the associations of an evening, in which they have been withdrawn from the dismalness of much of their own surroundings, and perhaps, fascinated away from the gross and sensual pleasures which, on all hands, are so plentifully offered them.

(ix.) I might tell how churches can work in their districts in connection with the establishment of a Day Nursery, that is so necessary a complement of our present School Board system; and in connection, too, (x.) with organisations that shall promote competition for Clean and Tidy Homes, for Window Gardening, and for Home Industries; but more details would be tedious.

Very much of what I have described is familiar to many of you,—these

and other and better plans are in vogue amongst a large number of you. All I have sought to do is to suggest to some, who may not have noticed them before, certain methods, proved to be practicable, for enabling each church to work in its surrounding district, on the parochial or territorial system, of the goodness and feasibility of which system I have the strongest conviction.

But, let me not seem to conclude while asking you to listen thus to the rattle of machinery. The motive power of the church is infinitely more to all of us than its mechanism. Contemplating, eagerly, critically if you will, this vision of the wheels of the church's work, let us all gaze with greater earnestness, and with adoring gratitude at the Living Spirit Who alone can make those wheels glow with glory, and move with power. And let us rejoice together in Him, our Lord, who, as God-Man, King of Strength on His throne of sapphire, is above all our ways and works; rejoice, whatever the failure of our plans and the folly of our little systems; for, as Charles Kingsley has well said for us,—“With such a King how can the world but go right?—and go right not my way, nor your way, but God's way.”

Our hope is not in schemes, however lofty, or in organisations, however complete. Our hope is in God.—

“That God which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far off, Divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

As for this Congregationalism of ours, and its mission in hastening on that future, it is not for us to say boastful things. As far as we may judge, if it be filled with the broader spirit, and employ the wider methods which, from time to time, our Divine Lord may reveal to it, it has a glorious outlook. For even when it shall be merged into that great church of the future, not yet plainly discerned by any of us, which shall gather up the advantages and virtues, and let fall the evils and faults of all presently existing churches, it will not only have been a worthy herald of such an ideal, but will have brought into it a wealth of experience and of character that would otherwise have been wanting. In the nearer presence of that ideal church, Congregationalism will doubtless have to say, “This must increase: I must decrease.” But, meanwhile, we may rejoice about our church polity, that there has not yet arisen a greater than it—greater in its faculties for serving Christ, or greater in its capacities for adapting itself to the ever-varying needs of the different centuries, countries, classes of mankind.

Reviews.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS, Exegetically and Practically Considered ; containing Sixty-Seven Homiletic Sketches, and Eighty-Three Sermonic Slippings. By DAVID THOMAS, D.D. Vol. III. Extending from Psalm cxviii. to cl. London : R. D. Dickenson, Farringdon Street.

Every reader, not less we rejoice to know of the present than of any past series, of the *Homilist* is so well acquainted with the spirit, and power, and methods of the author of this Commentary, that there is no need for any characterisation of his works on our Review pages. But while notifying to our readers the appearance of this volume, the third in the Homilistic Library that is to contain all Dr. Thomas's productions, and the last of his Commentary on the Psalms, we may call attention to one or two particular points in this work. To every passage in every Psalm under consideration, Dr. Thomas brings all his signal forces of suggestive analysis, so that no important phrase of the writers', and no recorded experience of any of them is ignored or neglected. Sufficient indication of that is to be found in the rich and varied Topical Index of seventy pages which concludes the volume. We never remember seeing a completer Index. It enhances the worth of the book as a book of reference a thousandfold. Very valuable, too, is the Supplement of twenty pages which deals with the Occasion and Date of each Psalm, the Classification of Psalms, Designations of the various Psalms, List of Psalms quoted and introduced in New Testament, Division of the Psalms into Books, Supposed Messianic Psalms, List of Archaisms and Ambiguous Expressions in the Prayer Book version of the Psalms, Parallel Passages in Psalms and the New Testament, and the Literature of the Psalms.

Publications of Messrs. Dean and Son, 160 Fleet Street.

THE STORY OF THE GOOD DOG ROVER.

THE LITTLE TRAVELLER.

THE HISTORY OF JACK THE CAT. By E. LECKY.

Messrs. Dean and Son deserve the thanks of all the mothers and nurses of young children, for creating such a library as the "Rose and Lily Series," so suited in every way to interest and charm the young mind in almost its first stages of development. Their new Chromo Toy-Books are truly fascinating, the numerous pictures are printed in bright colours with a softness, delicacy, and life-like touch that cannot fail to charm the

eyes even of adults. This library, at once so cheap, so beautiful, and attractive, will undoubtedly find its way into every nursery of the land. The three volumes before us are, however, only a portion of the library. We perceive there are also "Every-day children," "Bonny Ada and Spray, Fun and Frolic, Pleasant Time Pictures, Old Time Pictures and Rhymes, Pictures and Rhymes, A Summer in the Country, In Town and Country," which we will be glad to notice.

THE LITTLE GEM LIBRARY. This library contains 24 short tales, with 144 chromo pictures. Each part of the library has an interesting little tale, with charming pictures.

MARTIN LUTHER'S FRIEND. By C. N. MARKS.

THE SOLDIER'S FRIEND. By ELLEN CLAYTON.

These two volumes are suitable for children of a more advanced age. The one contains an interesting sketch of Florence Nightingale, with illustrations, and the other an account of the Elector of Saxony. These, also, will prove a great enjoyment to young people.

Publications of the Sunday School Union, 56, Old Bailey.

YOUNG ENGLAND.

THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE. New Series.

CELEBRATED DUNCES. By TOM BROWN.

DENNY FROM HAVEN TO HAVEN. By ANNIE GRAY.

YOUNG ENGLAND is a tolerably large and very handsome volume. It treats subjects of great variety. We have here most interesting natural history facts, scientific incidents, biographic sketches, puzzles, poetry, tales, sports, and numerous columns under the heading of "Things Worth Noting." It abounds, too, with life-like pictorial illustrations on a large variety of subjects. It is one of the best Annuals we have seen for the young.

THE CHILD'S OWN MAGAZINE is a smaller volume and for younger children. It is equally interesting, having tales and anecdotes of all kinds, also some pretty pictures, which cannot fail to delight. The cover is most artistic and beautiful.

CELEBRATED DUNCES. This is a book full of biographic information of the boyhood of some of the great men of the world, those who in childhood and youthhood were proverbially dull, but who, in after-life, became some of the brightest stars in the hemisphere of art, literature, and science. Among those who were "dunces" in young life, we have Dr. Adam Clark, the great Biblical scholar; Sir David Wilkie, the celebrated

painter ; John Hunter, the renowned surgeon ; Archdeacon Paley, Thomas Chalmers, Goldsmith, Newton, the famous Sheridan, &c. This is a book that should be put into the hands of every boy who may draw from it inspiration. The book is well conceived and well written.

DENNY. This is a tale consisting of twenty-six chapters. It is written in a style that will interest the young, it is good, not only in conception and execution, but in purpose and tendency. It has several pictorial illustrations which add much to its interest.

SATURDAY'S BAIRN. By BRENDA. London : Shaw and Co., Paternoster Row.

Here is a story written by a talented, well-known, and highly-esteemed authoress. We do not wonder that it has reached its sixth edition, for the more it is known the more it will be read. It is one of those tales of which one reader may make many. It is most touching in its character and elevated in its tone.

BATTLE STORIES FROM BRITISH AND EUROPEAN HISTORY. By DAVENPORT ADAMS. London : Sonneschien and Co.

The Duke of Wellington, who seems to have been possessed of a mind of low order, and at Eton and the other schools to which he was sent, proved such a dolt that his mother gave him up as unfit for anything requiring much ability and application, and decided he should join, what was then called, the "*fools' profession*." He became a great soldier ; but a great soldier may be, and often is, a very small man. Hence, individually, we have no admiration for professional man-slayers, however skilful, adroit, and successful in their fiendish occupation. Albeit they have so affected the history of the race and created such epochs that one cannot attain a knowledge of human history without some information concerning their doings. Hence, in this sense, such books as this are useful. The work before us contains interesting accounts of European battles, such as Byzantium, Auray, Cressy, Portiers, Navarrete, Agincourt, Pavia, Lutzen, The Dunes, Blenheim, Ramilies, Oudenard, Malplaquet, Pultowa, Waterloo, Inkermann, Hastings, Falkirk, Bannockburn, Towton, Bosworth, Flodden, Marston, Naseby, Sedgmoor, Culloden, Plassey, Meannel, Haidarabad, Guzerat. The author of this work has not only written much, but written well. He evidently does not write for the sake of book making, but to give people information on subjects of general interest and importance. There are no waste words or foggy expressions. His style is clear and condensed.

THE CHILDREN'S PILGRIMAGE. By L. T. MEADE. London: T. Shaw, Berner's Street.

Here is a tale for the young. It is divided into three parts, "Looking for the Guide," "Finding the Guide," and "The Great Journey." The design of this book is not mere amusement or information of a secondary order, but it is usefulness, and usefulness of the higher kind, not merely intellectual, but moral. Its aim is to help the soul on through the shadowy and winding walks of life, into the Paradise of light and love.

THE FIRESIDE ANNUAL FOR 1883.

We are glad to find that the various annual publications of Rev. Charles Bullock, not only continue to exist, but to improve and multiply.

This volume of the "FIRESIDE" has all the characteristics of former volumes, and, in some cases, more than ordinary merit. It is redolent with facts taken from the domain of mind and matter, history, art, and science. It has several tales. "*Mrs. Willoughby's Octave*," is interesting in conception, excellent in style, and fraught with wholesome, moral influences. It also contains other stories of considerable merit. In its portrait gallery there are life-like pictures of several eminent men, such as Dr. Vaughan, Dean Close, Dr. Richardson, Lloyd Garrison, Samuel Plimsoll, to all of which is attached a brief sketch of the respective lives. There are some interesting epitaphs on parish clerks. We give the following, which is inserted on a head-stone near the south porch of Bingham Church, Nottinghamshire:—

"Beneath this tomb lies Thomas Hart,
 Years fifty-eight he took the part
 Of Parish Clerk: few did excel.
 Correct he read, and sang so well,
 His words distinct, his voice so clear,
 Till eighteen hundred and fiftieth year
 Death cut the brittle thread, and then
 A period put to his Amen.
 At eighty-two his breath resigned
 To meet the fate of all mankind:
 The third of May his soul took flight
 To mansions of eternal light.
 The bell for him, with awful tone,
 His body summoned to the tomb.
 Oh, may his sins be all forgiven,
 And Christ receive him into Heaven."



The
Leading Homily.

THE HIGHEST "GOOD;"
THE END OF HUMAN EDUCATION.

"WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD, TO THEM WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE."—*Romans* viii. 28.

ON the benefits of suffering, Paul could speak with great authority. He had drunk a full cup to its very dregs. He had endured bodily weaknesses and spiritual temptations. He had suffered hardships and poverty, the dangers of shipwreck, and the degradation of imprisonment. He had contended with the unceasing persecutions of his enemies, the distrust of his fellow Christians, the implacable hatred of Jews, and the mockeries of Greeks. His ministry had been hindered, his body had been covered with wounds, and his limbs burdened with chains. His worn form had been bent with many crosses, his soul darkened with many cares, and his eyes filled with many tears. But under all these strokes of trial, his faith had strengthened, and his heart grown large. He felt sure that all the failures and disappointments of his life, had turned out for his good. Every Christian may have the same confidence. He is God's child, and, therefore, his chastisements are tokens of his Father's love. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." Every human child expects discipline from his father, but he does not lose confidence in the

father's good-will and kindness. The child of God may expect sore trial, but he will take that as a token of his Father's affection. Like the much-tried Job, he will exclaim, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

I.—THERE IS A DIVINE PURPOSE IN ALL THE EVENTS OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. Nothing goes by chance or haphazard with God. All beings, all things, and all happenings are involved in a Divine plan.

(a) It is said the Christian *is called*. There is a sense in which all are called by God. God's invitation is to all. In some the voice is muffled and drowned in the whirl of self-interest and the din of passion. They refuse God's invitation, and reject His loving appeals. But there are many who listen to His whispers in their conscience. His voice sounds louder and louder in them, till it is heard like the sound of many waters, above the clamour of worldly passions. In every critical hour of life they listen for the guiding voice. Whenever they come to the cross roads of life, they look out for His direction. God's sovereignty and man's free agency are two factors in every Christian's life. He is a chosen one of God; his whole spiritual life in its origin, progress, and completion is from Him. But he is free as the air. He enjoys the freedom of truth, purity, and love, which is the freedom of Christ.

(b) But the Christian is not only called of God, *his life is according to a Divine plan*.

No wise builder builds without a plan. No artist paints without design. God is a great Builder and Artist, and there is a Divine plan in all His works. When an ignorant peasant looks up to the heavens on a clear night, he can see nothing but a wilderness of light, stars, and star-dust, strewn through the fields of space. But the man of science can discern in this wilderness law and order. He can see that every atom of star-dust is a part of a system, and is in its place, doing its appointed work in the great whirling motions of the universe. According to the blind unbeliever, life is a wild chaos, without any guiding principle of order. But the Christian can see a Divine plan in all the tumult and confusion of his history. Nothing can go

wrong with him. The great Builder, Artist, and Leader of his life will soon put all wrongs right.

When Columbus was on his first voyage of discovery, and was approaching the shores of the New World, he was steering straight towards the coast of Florida, but at the time a flock of sea birds flew across the track of his vessel. One of his men took it as a sign from heaven that they ought to follow the track of the birds. Columbus shared his superstition, and turned the keel of his vessel. In doing so he changed the destiny of two continents, and thus turned the whole course of modern history. Well, if it be true that God guides the sea birds in their flight, and shapes the destiny of nations down along the centuries, it is not difficult for us to believe that He leads us in our personal history. God has a place for each one of us in His universe, and from behind the veilings of His providence He leads us by ways that we do not know. And He sometimes leads us to temptations, trials, crosses, and sorrows in order to work out for us the special end of good which He has in view for us.

The consciousness of being involved in such a plan gives indescribable dignity to our life, and makes its meanest surroundings glitter with a light which is not their own. Even a humble home and poor furniture borrow a lustre from above. With such a Divine purpose in our history, there is no waste page or stray leaf in the book of our life. The Divine plan lights up all our cares, hallows all our griefs, and dignifies all our most servile labours. We live in a charmed circle, and are surrounded by Divine ministries. Even life and death, angels and principalities, height and depth, things present and things to come, are made helpers and ministrants to our eternal welfare.

So we never get tired of singing the immortal inspired hymn of the great Catholic divine and poet—

“Lead, kindly Light.”

II.—THERE IS A DIVINE GOOD IN ALL THE SHARP DISCIPLINE AND BITTER CHASTISEMENTS OF LIFE. “*All things work together for good.*” All sufferings, failures, disappointments, blunders, sins, and passions, are under God’s control. There are many wheels

and many parts in a great machine, but they all co-operate to produce a certain result. In nature there are many forces and elements, and all in motion and working together to produce the rock, the flower, the tree. The world is very beautiful to-day, but it has passed through physical earthquakes, volcanic outbursts, and violent catastrophes in coming to its present glory. If a human creature had been permitted to watch the rude evolutions through which this globe was passing thousands of years ago, he would have seen nothing but blind force producing hopeless confusion. But God saw the good end in view. And even now there is a wonderful inter-dependence among all living creatures. Plants cannot live without animals, and animals cannot live without plants. Plants feed the animals with their oxygen, and animals feed plants with carbonic acid. The Great Spirit is in the wheels of nature, evolving them to a glorious end of good. Fires and floods, storms and snows, have done their work, and behold it is very good!

Even our beautiful body is the result of ages of stern rigorous discipline and experience. The form and texture of a human muscle, the thickness of a human bone, the light and electricity of a human eye, the pathos of a human face, have been slowly perfected and evolved in pain and travail through thousands of pioneer beings. By inexorable strokes of trial our bodies are what they are.

The same truth is taught in the Providences of God—they all work together for a great good. Some can understand how great deliverances, wonderful escapes, abundant harvests, and mighty successes can be for our good. But fatal epidemics and destructive storms are thought to be God's visitations of judgment. In vain has the book of Job for forty centuries condemned such a view. In vain has Christ declared, for eighteen centuries, that the Galileans who were struck down by the fall of the tower of Siloam were not guiltier than others. The Bible teaches that a dark sorrow is no sign of God's wrath. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

There are Christians, who like Elijah before his vision, can never see God except in the great events which disturb the

world—in the hurricanes, earthquakes, and devouring fires. All great sorrows are “ordered of the Lord,” they say, and so they bow down and are subdued, awe-struck and submit with good grace. But God is in the serene pure light of the dawn, as well as in the thunderbolts of the tempest. He is in the smiles of children and joys of a happy family, as well as in the sombre shadows which fall on a home desolated by affliction. He is in the little fibres, threads, and sinuosities of our life; in the small tints as well as in the great shadows. But some of you are saying: “Such a creed as this is all nonsense. Real life gives a pitiless contradiction to it all. Bitter failures, fatal sicknesses, and cruel disappointments fall on men who pray and trust God, as well as on others who blaspheme.” Such objectors do not understand what Paul means by “good.” By “good” you mean worldly success, vigorous health, external glory, material fortune, the applause of the world, and selfish pleasures. By “good” Paul means holiness, love, true blessedness, and eternal life. There are Christians here this morning, perhaps, who once possessed strength, riches, influence, and the applause of the world. But a strange Providence has destroyed their plans, diminished their resources, threatened their reputation, shattered their health, and darkened their whole future. Of course they have sustained a loss in all their cruel deceptions. But they have also gained. In their suffering they learned to detach themselves from all that is base and selfish, and from the illusions of worldly grandeur. Their earthly losses have left behind them the spirit of resignation, a humble temper, a patient and kind disposition. Self-sacrifice is now the charm of their life, God is their portion, and heaven is their home.

When the first man saw the sun going down in the west, no doubt he quailed at the thought that hopeless night and blank nothingness were to follow. But the coming of night was really the lifting away the veil of sunbeams that blinded and dazzled him so that he could not see the wealth and glory of the vast creation in which he lived. So the deceitful glare of this earthly scene obstructs our spiritual vision. When our earthly sun goes down, our spiritual lights come out to view.

There is a classic story which relates that a fire once ran over the Pyrenean mountains, destroying all the vineyards of the inhabitants. The villagers wept over the loss of their vines, but by-and-bye they discovered that the fire which had destroyed their grapes had also opened by its heat deep fissures in the rocks, through which gleamed rich veins of silver.

There are thousands of people who are living in outward prosperity, they have good credit at their bank, they are envied by all who know them, and often congratulated upon their supposed good fortune. But they are poor in all that constitutes permanent, real wealth. But there are thousands who have lost their vines by the fire of adversity, and yet that fire has wrought out in them a noble manhood, an enfranchised will, a purified courage, a sweet resignation, an invincible trust in God, and a God-like blessedness. They inherit the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God is within you.

III.—THE DESCRIPTION OF THOSE FOR WHOM THE DIVINE PURPOSE WORKS A BENEFIT. In some the Divine chastisement produces murmuring, rebellion, anger, impatience, and hatred. It depends upon the disposition of those who are subjected to them. Let me illustrate.

There are in nature powers of destruction. Beneath a lovely flower there often lurks a subtle poison, which may lull us to a sleep from which we can never wake. Hidden in the atmosphere is the hurricane which can overthrow the mightiest tower of strength, and sleeping in the air is the electricity which can rend the sombre sky and strike our dwellings with thunderbolts. Put the ignorant, savage man in the presence of these powers, and he will expose himself to danger and death. But the man of science will extract the poison, and by a clever intermixture he will make it a remedy for his ills; he will draw life from that which will cause death to others. To the breath of the wind he will spread the sails of his ship, and thus compel that terrible power of nature to obey and serve him. He will receive the steam into his apparatus, and oblige it to move his machinery, heave his hammers, weave his stuffs, and grind his food. He will lay hold of the lightning itself, and upon an imperceptible thread, cast

into the depths of the ocean, command it to carry his thoughts to the ends of the world. All those fatal destructive forces of nature are made to "work together," under the foreseeing eye of his genius, to prolong, adorn, and enrich his life.

This is a feeble picture of the way in which a believing soul can turn to good all the events of life.

Failure, poverty, sickness, cruel suffering to a godless soul, are just what poison, lightning, and steam are to an ignorant savage. But a Christian converts them into blessings. They produce in him humility and resignation, patience and calmness, sanctification and eternal life.

We gather as practical conclusions—

1. *Every life is involved in a Divine Providence.* It is possible to break away from God's order, to renounce God's plan of life, and follow your own self-will. But it is not possible to escape God's Providence. He will follow after you wherever your sin will lead you. Napoleon went far away from God. He thirsted for destruction and conquest. But God followed him in his bloody track and blackened wastes, in order to bring all possible good out of the evil. There is no escaping the hand and eye of God. But there is also a Providence that goes before a good man, leads him on, and marks out his way for him by shutting him off from one line of action and shutting him into another. No man who prays daily—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is left very long without an answer. Godless and worldly men plunge on and on with no guidance but their own self-will, and so they get beaten about by the motions of the tides of human passion and the dashing of the waves of Divine Providence. But the man of faith, like Samuel, listens for the Divine voice, and hears it in the hush of the morning and evening prayer. A Divine calm comes down upon him, and lies about him all day. If you will try to climb heavenward, a Divine Providence will draw you with its golden links and engird you with invisible helps till your feet are firm on the summit of glory.

2. *Every life is more or less involved in a Divine discipline.* With some life is a pleasure-ground—a place of sunshine and play. With others it is a lottery-ground, where men and women

hunt for prizes. Wealth, fame, and pleasure are the laurel wreaths for which they strive. They who win them are considered happy, and they who miss them are considered failures. Such children of this world are ignorant of the true meaning of life. Life is a school of discipline, and just as the oak must have for its growth not only the sun and dew but the wind and storm, so human life needs crosses, failures, and bitter trials. These are God's rough instruments for the education of our manhood and womanhood. They serve to drive out the evil and poison, and educe all that is wisest, purest, and noblest in us.

3. *The triumph of all good is involved in the Divine Providence.* In this glorious chapter I can hear a wail in nature and the heart of man. Man and nature are in bondage for the present. There is strife everywhere. The creature is made subject to vanity and corruption. But I can also hear the jubilant tone of hope and final victory. If we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified together. Our present sufferings are not to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. All creatures shall be delivered from vanity, corruption, and bondage.

Some of the grandest overtures begin with discord and fierce fight, as if spirits struggled together and blended in terrific clash and controversy. Then an exquisite strain of melody flashes out louder and louder, till at last it predominates over all other sounds, and the air is filled with the glad song of triumph. Bend down your ear to the great heart of Humanity, and you might hear discords, sharp conflicts, the clashing sounds of secret sorrows, unsatisfied longings and yearnings, harsh notes of discontent and anxiety. But listen longer, and you will hear above the groans sweet strains of hope and joy. These tender tones will grow louder and louder every year, and by-and-by they will fill the world with songs of victory. Misfortune, poverty, loss, sickness, pain, evil report, and death itself will be transmuted by a spiritual alchemy into fortune, riches, gain, health, pleasure, good report, and eternal life. *Redemption* will be written in flaming letters on all the elements of a redeemed world, and on the temple of regenerated humanity.

CROYDON.

D. BLOOMFIELD JAMES.

Germ of Thought.

The God of Bethel.

"I AM THE GOD OF BETHEL."—*Gen. xxxi. 16.*

SOME twenty years or more had elapsed since Jacob was at Bethel; however, the strange events of that night would never be effaced from his memory. But now, inasmuch as he was about to return to his own country, and on his way would have to meet his brother Esau, it was necessary that the Bethel scene should be more vividly impressed on his mind, so the Lord said, "I am the God of Bethel." There are times in our history when our Father seems to draw nearer to us than usual; when old fellowships are revived in order to strengthen and encourage us to face some trouble, to overcome a strange temptation, or to undertake some important work. To appease the wrath of Esau was by no means easy, and to return to Canaan with his family and possessions was an undertaking involving not a few dangers; so mention is made of Bethel to strengthen Jacob's hands. The text suggests—

I.—THE ADVANTAGE OF HAVING SPECIAL LOCALIZED OR LIMITED IDEAS OF GOD. The idea of a God is our inheritance, an inheritance which no power can wrest from us, it belongs to the human family, is not limited to any particular tribe or nation, nor confined to any age, neither does it depend on any social or civilizing conditions. It is an heirloom handed down from generation to generation; our family has lost many valuable possessions, our purity is gone, our peace of conscience destroyed, and our perfect conceptions of God are lost; but in the darkest night we have not entirely lost sight of the Divine, and in the fiercest storms which have assailed us we have managed somehow to retain a firm hold on the conception of a God. This spiritual

consciousness of the existence of a Higher Power, of an Invisible Ruler, of a Supreme Being is inwrought in our nature. Men's opinions and conceptions respecting the Infinite differ widely in various parts of the world, and in different ages. The social, educational, and moral surroundings of the people, as well as the direction given by the previous age, or ages, to their thoughts, may partly account for this variety respecting our conceptions of God. But *a God* our humanity *must* have before it can be satisfied.

The Bible does not demonstrate, does not prove, the existence of the true and living God, the fact is taken for granted; it is the foundation on which the entire Bible rests.

In the Old Testament, what we may call the localization of God, is very clearly and distinctly referred to, as if the idea of an Infinite God were too awful, too perplexing and grand for even the saints then living to comprehend it. Adam in "the garden," Abram on Moriah, Moses "in the bush," Elijah on Carmel, &c. Here God speaks of Himself to Jacob as the God of Bethel; the meeting on that night was not to be effaced from the mind, and the patriarch was to think now of God as He *then* appeared above the ladder. Probably that was the first time for Jacob to meet with God; he had often listened to his mother speaking of Him, and had heard his father call on His name, but he had not come face to face with God until that night at Bethel, when Heaven was opened, and he had to form a personal conception of the God who rules the destiny of man. He could never become the father of a great nation without this personal contact with God. Our greatness in this respect cannot be acquired by listening to the experience of others, by reading the history of God's dealings with the race, we must be filled with awe at the nearness of His infinite presence, we must see His face, and hear His voice ourselves if we are to be of any value in this world. It is a great blessing to be brought up in a family where the name of God is honoured, and His laws observed, still we must know Him as being specially and most intimately connected with some Bethel of our own, if our lives are to be strengthened with His might.

To all this it may be said, "The human family at that time was in its infancy, men's knowledge of the spiritual was very limited, they had need of localities, and of certain limitations before they could think at all of the Eternal God; all that is done away with *now*: our knowledge is such, and the clear light of the Gospel is so strong, that we can dispense with those artificial aids when meditating on God, and when holding communion with Him." In reply, we ask, what is the strongest and purest light which the Gospel sheds on the person of God? Is it not the incarnation of the Lord Jesus, or in other words, the localisation or limitation of the Divine in the human? Thus, and thus alone, can we in our weakness and darkness have a true conception of the God who inhabiteth eternity; we must have Him tabernacling in the flesh, before we can love and serve Him with the whole heart.

Probably some of you have been perplexed with the fact that it is impossible for any two persons to think alike of God. The God *I* have in my mind, and whom I worship here this morning, is not the same in every respect as *yours*. This, however, ought to be a source of joy to us, inasmuch as thus He becomes *our own* individual God, *our own* inheritance and rock, in a sense in which no other being in the universe can claim Him. To Jacob alone, of all the people on the earth, He was the God of *Bethel*. The same idea is suggested in the words of the Saviour after His resurrection, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." As if He said, "You cannot understand the eternity and infinitude of His love as I can, you cannot have the same conceptions of His Fatherhood as I have, still He is *your* God as well as mine."

II.—THE LOCALISED IDEA OF GOD WHICH JACOB HAD (at Bethel), MADE HIM SENSIBLE OF HIS DEEP TENDERNESS AND UNCHANGING FAITHFULNESS. When a wanderer, homeless and friendless, when the curse of an injured brother darkened his path, when sadness and sorrow filled his heart, and when the future was dark and mysterious, how great the kindness and tenderness of God to visit him then! And now he is reminded of that fact, as if the Lord said, "When the world seemed cold

and hard, when thy life was cut off from all friendship and love, when earth appeared barren and dark, I then taught thee the consoling lesson that there was a kind providence over all, that the earth had not become so entirely defiled that it could not be touched by the feet of My holy angels, I made one little spot, at least, on the cold, unsympathetic earth a *Bethel* for thee, I am still the same God." Jacob had altered, had seen a little more of life, and his circumstances were changed, but the loving-kindness of the Lord remained the same.

It may be that many days pass away without our being deeply impressed with the sense of God's loving-kindness, perhaps weeks glide to eternity without our thinking of His faithfulness; but when we hear a whisper from Heaven calling our attention to the Great Father, as the One who is connected with some Bethel in the past history of our life, we then become conscious of His unceasing care, and of His unspeakable love. And even if there be no special Divine interpositions to which we can point in our individual lives, we can join the whole family on earth, and consider the eternal testimony of God's faithfulness. All other names are forgotten, and all other places sink into insignificance when Calvary is mentioned. Our Father is willing for us to call Him now, "the God of Calvary," inasmuch as "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." True, there have been dark periods in the history of nations, and of the Church of Christ; revolutions of no ordinary character have taken place from time to time, but if we look on the human race from this great centre of God's love, we will perceive that He has not been unmindful of His children's well-being and prosperity. Remembering God as He manifested Himself in the incarnation and passion of His Son, is the life and strength of our hope when looking to the future. As long as we hear the Lord's voice above the noise and tumult of the battle, saying, "I am the God of Calvary," we need not trouble ourselves as to our own providential resources, nor can there be a doubt as to the final victory of righteousness and truth over sin and iniquity. Earth is to be cleansed from every stain of sin, and made like unto Heaven.

III.—THAT A TRUE REALISATION OF GOD WILL BEAUTIFY OUR LIVES WITH SOLEMNITY AND HOPEFULNESS. “Beautify our lives with *solemnity*!” some of you are ready to exclaim. “Let the *solemn* play a part in the history of those who are tired of life, we want the cheerful and the gay; if there is room for solemnity at all in this world, let it mark the wrinkled brows of those who have been disappointed in life, and who are hourly expecting to hear the summons calling them to another world.” Still we repeat the statement, “Beautify your lives with solemnity,” inasmuch as your life lacks one of the chief elements of moral beauty and loveliness if it is ignorant of the sweet solemnity arising from the living consciousness that the Holy Spirit has lifted you from the condition of the beast which perisheth, to the moral plane where immortality will clothe you with indestructible glory. It is not of the moody, pensive, gloomy solemnity which some men put on in order to appear religious, that I speak, but of that which is produced by heart-felt love towards the One in whose presence our chief happiness ought to consist; that deep, reverent solemnity filling our inmost soul at the thought that the Eternal Father cares for us all, and that His Spirit yearns over the sin of the world, and most intensely longs for its entire removal. That is a mood, a temper, a frame of mind, a condition of the spirit without which the life of man can never be fair, beautiful, and god-like. There is hardly a period in the whole history of Jacob, when he appears more beautiful and lovely than when he realized the glory and majesty of God at Bethel, when his spirit was filled with awe, and he exclaimed, “God is in this place and I knew it not, this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.” You may take a walk in your garden at midnight, your roses are out in full bloom, your lilies have not lost their pure beauty, and you pass other flowers in abundance, but you are not entranced with their beauty, you want the light to enable you to see their various colours and exquisite tints. So you may employ the energies which God has given you in connection with material and perishable objects, you may spend your time in the gratification of self if you think proper to do so, but no

one will be able to see the loveliness of those powers, and the true glory of your manhood will be hid until the Great Sun—the God of Bethel—sheds His light upon your soul, and until your whole being is permeated with the solemnity and hopefulness which spring from personal fellowship with Him.

Jacob's future prospects were by no means bright that evening when he laid himself down to sleep. True, he was on his way to Laban's house, but he knew not what reception he would have. The God of his fathers, by that strange dream, dispelled the mist and darkness, and inspired his breast with hope and courage. A promise was given of guidance and protection till he should return to his own country. Our path in life may be often dark, the hills we have to climb may be very steep, and the burdens we have to carry may be pressing us almost to the ground, yet our hope cannot be crushed, and our confidence of a complete and triumphant victory over all our foes cannot be destroyed if we have seen God standing above the ladder at Bethel. And however pleasant and prosperous a man's outward circumstances may be, his life must be a sad and miserable failure if he has not the God of Bethel as his Friend and Defender.

OFFORD ROAD, LONDON.

JENKIN JONES.

The Everlasting Arms.

“UNDERNEATH ARE THE EVERLASTING ARMS.”—*Deut.* xxxiii. 27.

THE patriotism, philanthropy, and piety of Moses were displayed most conspicuously, just before his death, in the intense solicitude he expressed for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the people whom he had been permitted to lead out of Egypt, and conduct towards the promised land. He knew his work was nearly done, and was anxious to give the people his last words, and pronounce upon them his benediction before he died. He has something special to say to each tribe, some special blessing to crave for each; and, above all, he has something to utter to them about

Jehovah, who had been their deliverer and king. He exults in the greatness of the Lord, and extols His goodness before all the people. He does not take any credit to himself, or ask for any eulogy to be pronounced upon his work. He felt he was only a weak and sinful man, and that all the successes of the past, all the blessings the tribes had received, must be traced to Him who had never left them, nor forsaken them. The 90th psalm, which Moses composed about this time, shows us what an overwhelming sense of human frailty, and of the fleetness of mortal life, came over him as he reviewed the way the people had trodden; all earthly things had convinced him of the transitoriness of man and the world; but he had increasing confidence in the Lord. He had been the dwelling-place of His people in all generations, and underneath all the mutations of time, had been the everlasting arms. This is one of the characteristics of the Bible, that it subordinates all things to God, and ascribes all praise and glory to Him. The people could give their hearty amen to all that Moses said, for the Lord had delivered them from their foes, supplied all their wants, and cared for them with unremitting constancy. Men of God, in all ages, have been able to adopt the words of my text when they have reviewed the way in which the Lord has led them. However many may have been the trials and troubles they have had to endure, they have had strength given them according to their day, the eternal God has been their refuge, and underneath them have been the everlasting arms. Let us look at these words in their broadest application; they are true in relation to the realms of *nature*, *providence*, and *grace*.

I.—IN NATURE. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." What elaborate, but *abortive* attempts, have been made by succeeding generations of scientific men to remove the everlasting arms from under humanity and the world. By abusing the laws of "evolution" and "development," the causative and creative energy of the Almighty has been *ignored* and, in some instances, *denied*. Our sole attention has been drawn to "protoplasm," "atoms," "molecules," and "germs," and the "arms" have been left as the *unknown quantity* because they lie hidden in eternity, and work

silently and unseen. It will help us out of all the difficulties into which godless speculations plunge us, by placing, as a first principle, and prime factor, the great truth that underneath all processes and phenomena, behind all causes, and before all effects, are the everlasting arms. Thus the first verse in the Bible is the rock upon which all the sciences must rest: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" any other foundation is only shifting and uncertain sand. What is true of creation, is equally true of repeated acts of reproduction, as seen in the evolution of the seasons and the constant putting forth of life and power in the world around us. What a constant tide of energy is flowing through creation; we live in the midst of an ocean of unexhausting and untiring might. Underneath the soil that quickens the seed, linked to the influences and essences that sustain and develop life, upholding all things in the universe, are the everlasting arms. Belief in these things is not only in harmony with the teaching of Holy Scripture, but also compatible with the laws of reason and the principles of true science.

II.—IN PROVIDENCE. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." In the affairs of men there is no such thing as chance; and in the history of nations things do not go on at random. God is in history, and the minutest events are under His cognizance and control. He rules among the inhabitants of earth and heaven, and makes even the wrath of man to praise Him. Things in this world do not take the Almighty by surprise, nor can they ever come to such a pass that He will be dismayed or defeated. The whole activity of Time is a drama which He superintends, and all the affairs of men, in some way or other, work out His sovereign will. The world is not a wandering waif in the wilderness of space, man is not a stray tossed upon the capricious waves of fortune, for the kingdom of Jehovah rules over all. The rise and fall of nations, as well as the events in individual lives, are guided by the everlasting arms that work underneath all things seen and unseen. If this is true, the doctrine of Pessimism is not true; and the Christian, with belief in the universal providence of God, must be an Optimist, and believe that all things will work together, sooner or later, for good,—for the general

good of our race, and the glory of God. Let us but believe this truth, then we shall bear our trials and troubles with less complainings, we shall be reconciled to the mysteries of providence, and shall hope for full and final deliverance from all the sorrows and sufferings to which, for a few fleeting years in this life of probation, we are exposed. When we think we are guiding our affairs, it is our Father who really guides us; His arms, unseen beneath, holds the reins and biases our wills. The affairs of Time are not in hopeless confusion, things are not being precipitated into chaos, the Great Creator still governs the kingdoms of the world, and by Him kings reign, and princes decree justice. Of nations, and of men, it may still be said—

“There is a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we may.”

And all things are gradually, but surely, moving on to the time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God, and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.

III.—THE GRACE. “Underneath are the everlasting arms.” In all the means that have been employed to rescue man from the ruin of the Fall, there has been the putting forth of unseen Divine energy. No rites, or ceremonies, or sacrifices, in themselves, could possibly avail to put away sin, and procure pardon and peace; the everlasting arms were underneath the Old Economy, and underneath the work which Christ performed for man. When there was no human arm to save, the Divine arm brought salvation. It was the infinite dignity, and Divine nature of the Redeemer that gave efficacy and power to the sacrifice that He offered on Calvary; and it is the fact that underlying the glorious Gospel of His grace, are the everlasting arms that makes the Gospel victorious over the deep-rooted enmity of sin, and the manifold evils by which it is opposed. The kingdom of Christ in the world is as “leaven,” as “a grain of mustard seed,” and, but for the accompaniment of Divine energy, it would be inoperative and abortive among men. It is so with the grace of God in the heart, the rise and progress of

religion in the soul. Underneath all the means we may use, and the efforts we may put forth, are the everlasting arms; *we* work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, but it is *God* who worketh within us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

How full of beauty the text is. How suggestive of *strength*. We speak of power as residing in the arms, and this anthropomorphic expression denotes that Divine power is under all things. How suggestive of *succour*, "arms" to sustain, to be extended for *supply*, "arms" to enfold and comfort, to hold up and keep from falling. How *gentle* those "arms" are, they enfold but do not crush the feeblest thing. How *large* they are, they lie under all things, above, beneath. How *merciful* they are, they are exerted to *save*, not to destroy. Let us rejoice that they are "*everlasting*." We know how frail and dying human arms are; we cannot make a safe and enduring prop of any earthly thing, but we may lean on the arms that hold all nature up, that never grow weak or weary.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

The World going after Christ.

"BEHOLD, THE WORLD IS GONE AFTER HIM."—*John* xii. 19.

THESE words contain a direct testimony to the popularity of Jesus Christ as a religious teacher. They were spoken by the Pharisees, our Saviour's most malignant enemies, a fact which greatly enhances their value. Popularity is a thing which the vast majority of men, especially of public men, greatly covet. It has many advantages; it opens new doors and wider spheres of usefulness. The words of a popular teacher are more attentively listened to, more implicitly believed in, and more readily complied with, than the words of those who are unknown to fame. Popularity very often is a mystery which cannot easily be accounted for. Sometimes we find very worthy men, men of

superior intellects, of wide attainments, and of untarnished character, living in the shade; whilst on the other hand, we find men who are not distinguished by any of these things, basking in the full blaze of celebrity and renown. The word "behold," at the beginning of this short sentence, seems to imply that the Pharisees marvelled at the popularity of Christ. Behold! how very wonderful that the world should have gone after Him! Two or three things may have caused their surprise. Christ had come from a humble home, His outward circumstances were not affluent, He had been nursed in the cradle of poverty, He had never sat at the feet of any of their Rabbis, nor enjoyed the advantages of their schools. We cannot now fully enter into the question, what were the elements of His popularity; but the following things may, in some measure, have contributed to it:—the beneficence of His works, the novelty of His teaching, the earnestness of His appeals, the beauty of His illustrations, the manner in which He brought His teaching to bear upon everyday life, and the felt possibility of His being the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, and the true Son of God. These six things may, in some degree, have contributed to his great popularity. "Behold, the world is gone after Him." Let us notice—

I.—SOME THINGS IN CHRIST WHICH INVITE THE WORLD TO GO AFTER HIM.

1. *His intrinsic greatness.* Greatness is attractive. The greater everywhere in nature attracts the lesser. Stars revolve around the sun; rivers seek a home in the ocean's bosom. So in society, the greater men lead and the lesser men eventually follow. Jesus Christ is the greatest that ever appeared in the world. The angel Gabriel foretold of Him, "He shall be great," and He more than fulfilled the prophecy. He is greater than Moses, than Solomon, than Jonah, than the Temple; He towers immeasurably above all; He stands unique in the ages.

2. *The comeliness of His character.* We know but little about the personal appearance of Christ. He is sometimes represented on the canvas as of singular beauty. Some are of opinion that the passage in the forty-fifth Psalm, "Thou art fairer than

the children of men," refers to His bodily appearance. Moral beauty is sometimes reflected in physical beauty ; and some think that our Saviour's body shadowed forth the comeliness of the Divinity which dwelt within Him, and that He was altogether lovely, and fairer than ten thousand. Of this, however, we have no positive knowledge. But we do know that His character was one of unique and immaculate beauty. Jesus Christ has borne the fierce criticisms of both friends and foes for eighteen hundred years. Criticising humanity has to say, "I find no fault in this man." He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, purer than light and whiter than snow.

3. *The intensity of His love.* Love is the great magnet of the moral world. Nothing influences souls like love. God is a God of love, and the Divine love is embodied and revealed in Jesus Christ. "Greater love hath no man than this ;" "Herein is love," spontaneous love, mighty love, everlasting love. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love ;" "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth,"—lifted to the cross where His love shall shine forth in the rich effulgence of its glory,—*"I will draw all men unto Me."* And were many a Christian man to relate his personal experience he would say, I was neither driven to Christ by the horrors of hell, nor enticed by the glories of heaven, but drawn by the strong arm of His mercy and the irresistible attractions of His love.

4. *The adaptability of His resources to meet the moral and spiritual wants of mankind.* The circulation of a book depends on the degree in which its contents are suitable to the wants or tastes of the majority of readers. Men seek after what is necessary to meet their wants. Christ is the Propitiation for our sins ; He is the Way by which our souls have access to the Father ; He is the Bread which came down from heaven ; He is the Tree of Life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations ; He is the Treasury of the Divine fulness, where there is enough, and more than enough to supply our every need. When humanity comes to realise its great want, as it will by-and-bye, there will be a general longing and sighing for Christ.

II.—TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE WORLD AT PRESENT GONE AFTER HIM?

1. *The literature of the world is going after Him.* Nothing would be easier than to bring up a heavy indictment against the Press. Think of all the falsehoods it has circulated, all the slanders it has indulged in, and the gainsayings it has been guilty of. But there is a bright side to it as well. The first book ever printed was a Latin Bible; the first book produced by the English press was Tyndal's Translation of the Scriptures; and, probably, by the Welsh press, Pryse's Translation of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. Literature has mightily increased during the last quarter of a century, but we rejoice to think of the place which Christ has found in its pages. Christ stands conspicuous in the best literature of the day. Milton's "Paradise Lost" is acknowledged to be one of the greatest masterpieces in English literature; critics differ as to who the hero is, whether man or Satan. But when read in conjunction with his "Paradise Regained," to me, it is nothing else than a grand epic poem to the glory and honour of King Jesus. Among the masterpieces of Welsh literature there are two poems, the one called "JESUS," and the other "EMMANUEL." The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth find their way, not only into volumes of sermons and books of divinity, but into histories, romances, and even the daily newspapers.

2. *Art is going after Him.* There are few things which a man of culture likes better than a good painting. Pictures not only meet our craving for the beautiful, but they are moral teachers, and the lessons in morality which they convey are not to be despised. We are told that one way by which Jesuits labour to prepare the minds of our Protestant country to embrace Popery, is by scattering Romish pictures throughout the length and breadth of the land. Certainly, there is reason enough why parents should be on their guard. But art bows its knee to Christ. Many of the greatest works of the best masters are taken from Scripture narratives, and from events in the life of Jesus. Raphael has painted "The Transfiguration;" Da Vinci, "The Last Supper;" Guido, "Christ in the Garden;" and Gustave

Doré, "Christ entering the Temple," "Christ leaving the Prætorium," and "The Night of Crucifixion."

3. *Legislation is going after Him.* On one occasion Theodosius the Great, the Roman Emperor, asked a vote from the Senate, whether the Pagan idols or Jesus of Nazareth should be the object of worship in the Empire. The Senate without a single dissentient decided for Jesus. Senates are not the proper places to decide such questions, but it is gratifying to see Legislation following in the footsteps of Christ. To the degree that Civil Law is founded on the eternal principles of the Book of God, to the same extent is the true progress of a nation and the general elevation of mankind to be expected. In modern legislation there are indications that the world comes to this. Cruelty and tyranny are giving way gradually to justice and equality.

4. *Wealth is going after Him.* Wealth has not always been on the side of Christ and His Gospel. "Not many of the noble were called." The Christian Church has been throughout the ages the poor man's Church. Now, however, the wealth of the world seems to be beginning to pay homage to Jesus. When the wise men came from the East, they presented unto Him gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Isaiah, in language of glowing imagery, has enumerated some of the sources which will contribute to the unbounded wealth of the Church of the future:—"the abundance of the sea," "the forces of the Gentiles," "multitude of camels," "the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah," "all the flocks of Kedar," "the rams of Nebaioth," "the ships of Tarshish," "their silver and their gold." "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron silver," &c. (Isaiah lx.) Already this prophecy is being fulfilled; millions of money roll to the feet of Jesus. Forsooth, men give their wealth to Christ rather than themselves. God demands the heart. A rebellious leader once sent a golden crown to Cæsar, when the Emperor said, "Submission first, then your crowns." So God demands men's obedience first,—*"My son, give Me thine heart."*

5. *Men are going after Him.* (a) *Men of all conditions in life.* In the crowds which follow Christ, we find tax-gatherers and fishermen, the poor and the outcast, and men like Nicodemus,

and Joseph of Arimathea, who were rulers of the people and members of the highest councils of the nation. (b) Men of *all ages*,—"Old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in hand for very age. And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." Fathers and mothers adore Him, and children shout their loud hosannahs to His praise. (c) Men of *all grades of moral character* are going after Him; those of unblemished morality, and those who have sunk deep in the mire of iniquity, join to follow Him. When Matthew wrote his Gospel, he said, "And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Were the Evangelist writing in this, the nineteenth century, he would have said that a great multitude followed Him from Asia, Africa, the South Sea Islands, and from beyond rivers and oceans. The literature, art, legislation, wealth, and men of the world, are going after Christ.

III.—SOME THINGS UPON WHICH WE ESTABLISH OUR BELIEF THAT THE WORLD IN ITS ENTIRETY WILL ONE DAY GO AFTER CHRIST.

1. *By going after Christ will the world obtain its greatest good.* Men are continually seeking after what is sometimes called the *summum bonum*—the chief good. Many are the voices which invite men's allegiance. I hear the noisy voice of worldliness saying, "Follow me;" and the enticing voice of pleasure exclaiming, "Follow me." In the Bible I hear the gentle, loving voice of the Great Prophet of Nazareth coming down through the ages, saying, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Follow Me, I will give you peace amidst the tumults of life, I will give you strength and joy in your dying hour; "I will receive you to Myself."

2. *The number and power of the agencies at work in order to accomplish this.* Think for a moment of all the exertions made at home, and in distant lands, to obtain this. All these cannot be in vain. All the invitations given, all the Bibles distributed, all the prayers offered, and the many examples of a Christ-like life, cannot be without effect. Results must follow. Harvest.

time will come. To the joyful sound of Christ's Gospel the world will one day echo a reply. "At the sound of the trumpet they shall come which are ready to perish in Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt." In the day of His power men from all climates will fall into His ranks, will rally round His banner, will swell His procession, and kings and queens will cast their crowns in showers at His feet.

3. *The promises of the Bible.* "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea," &c. (Ps. lxxii. 8-11, 17). Abraham Lincoln, one of the truest monarchs of humanity, was elected to the Presidential Chair of America by a majority of votes in each of the States. When the result of the polling was declared the enthusiasm of the crowd assembled was so intense that it gave vent to itself by singing the Doxology,—“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,” &c. A day will come when Jesus will be proclaimed King by the unanimous voice of the human race. The teeming millions of the East will swell the anthem—“Crown Him Lord of all;” and those of the far West will echo the reply—“Crown Him Lord of all;” and the isles of the sea will bow at the sway of His sceptre, and pay allegiance to His throne. This lost world, which, like a wandering child, has gone astray from God, will be restored into the bosom of Him who made it, and the earth will be filled with the Divine glory.

(*From the Welsh.*)

LLANELLY.

D. LEWIS.

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“Remember, every living thing around us,—every child we meet, every flower we see, every blade of grass,—is a “Sacrament”—an outward and visible sign of the nearness of God the Holy Ghost. Why is that flower a *living* flower? Because He has been brooding over it. It would not be alive without Him. How did it come out thus in colour and beauty? God the Holy Ghost has been there, so fashioning and painting it. How is it that you are alive,—able to use your mind and to bend your knees? Why is that arm so strong? Because He is over you as the Giver of Life, giving to you, moment by moment, your strength, your life. We are living and moving under the overshadowing wings of God the Holy Spirit.”—BISHOP WEBB.

## Heaven as Revealed by Jesus.

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"IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS, IF IT WERE NOT SO I WOULD HAVE TOLD YOU. I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU."—*John* xiv. 2.

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DECEPTION is the plague of our life. Much of our life environment is falsehood. Our pilgrimage is among quicksands. Our hearts are false. The world is false. There are decoys to entrap, hopes that are hollow. We find a traitor in a friend. False teachers, false philosophies perplex and distress us. Life's good plays fantastically before us, like the enmaddening mirage of the desert. Imaginary ills start up around us to complete the sum of our disappointments. Jesus will not throw in an additional deception, neither will He suffer us to be deceived. He will be one great exception.

This Gospel of John is distinguished by references to Christ's truthfulness. In the first chapter, John conducts us down from the Eternal "Word," to Jesus "full of grace and truth."\*

The manifest design of the Gospel is to set out and defend our Lord's Divinity. Christ's veracity has its part to play in St. John's argument. It is the key-stone of the arch. When the High Priest, agitated by the hope and expectation of a Divine advent, and furious in the presence of a supposed impostor, said, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus would have put in a very emphatic disclaimer. They stone Him, and eventually put Him to death on this ground alone, "because He made Himself the Son of God." Mark the word "*made*." He did not suffer them to use the title as a loose expression, but He *made* the effort to establish the conviction and belief that He was "the Son of God."

The insertion of this asseveration of His veracity at this particular portion of the Gospel is exquisitely appropriate. The words of this chapter fall from His lips as He stands with His

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\* See Concordance for similar assertions of His veracity.



face to the cross. The shadows and the heaviness of His passion are upon Him. He is on His way to die, to die as the "Son of God." If He were not, He would have told us. Now He turns to His disciples, made sorrowful by the announcement of His departure, with the great consolation, "In My Father's house are many mansions," &c. It is the lot of the disciple to be in heaviness for a time. Jesus would throw their thoughts beyond even the garden of this earth's hospital, to the all-comfort giving and sustaining hope, "the Father's house." Realise the force of the triplet—"Veracity," "Divinity," "Heaven." "Veracity" confirms "Divinity." "Divinity" sees beyond earth's sorrows and graveyards, and speaks to us authoritatively and veraciously of the life and home beyond.

I.—OUR LORD WAS SILENT AS TO THE LOCALITY OF THIS ETERNAL DWELLING.

Men have guessed that this earth purged will be the ultimate residence of the glorious family of God. Eliminate its sin, temper its fierce heats and biting blasts, put an end to its perils, and let it be said—"The tabernacle of God is with men;" how beautiful then would earth be! Definite revelation on this point would have satisfied our curiosity without adding to our blessing. The illimitable universe is "The Father's house." It teems with indications of His Fatherly care and wisdom. "Heaven is His throne, earth is His footstool."

II.—NEVERTHELESS THERE WAS MUCH FULNESS AND FORCE IN THE DESCRIPTION—"MY FATHER'S HOUSE."

This fulness opened and realized by (1) *Antithesis*. Zion's sacred, glorious, but desecrated Temple He had designated "My Father's house." The emphasis with which He said "I go to prepare," &c., originated in His sorrowful recollections of the one on earth. Its every memory was blighted. Did Simeon in beautiful faith and hope make it echo with his "Nunc Dimittis"? Zacharias was filled with offensive rationalizing incredulity. If to Himself the meaning of its solemn passover was pregnant and clear, temple service and rites were enigmas rather than revelations to His holy mother. If angels visited its sacred precincts, to speak the comforting promises of heaven to a faithful priesthood, Satan

used its pinnacle as a platform of assault to tempt Jesus and to thwart the ministry of redeeming love. The publican, driven by memories of guilt and a broken heart, prayed there, but a scornful Pharisee desecrates the place made sacred by the presence of Jehovah, and the hour made sacred by a sinner's grief. The widow, in beautiful, trustful consecration, cast her two mites into the Lord's treasury, but she was the only one at that feast of giving that made a sacrifice for love and God. The children made it ring with their sweet hosannahs, but its priesthood were more furious against Him on their account. In Simeon and the publican the spiritual had triumphed over the carnal there, but in the persons of the priests and traders, carnalness, mammon, and vice, had triumphed. All the sanctities of the place were trampled in the pollutions of the shambles. His eye rested also upon its day of doom. The portents of ill were already in the sky. What a doom! Driven to His "Father's house" by Roman steel. Their refuge became their slaughter house. Too much business for the sword, the torch burned the living with the dead. On its account He had wept. He has now shaken its dust from His feet. (2) Force of "My Father's house" realized by "*Symbol*." The Father's house, on Zion, was a household sanctuary. (*a*) *Aspect domestic*. The temple contained chambers for its priests, singers, keepers, and worshippers. The children who hailed Him with their hosannahs were in all probability temple children—children who filled the outer aisles, day by day, with their innocent mirth and beautiful prattle, giving it the air and aspect of home. The Lord's phraseology is domestic, "My Father's house." "Where do you live?" said a missionary to a London Arab. The child replied, "At home, Sir." "Where is home?" again asked the servant of the Church. "Where mother lives," responded the bundle of rags. Heaven is home, because it is the Father's dwelling-place. Home is the climactic idea of inspired revelations of heaven. What force the idea would have for the disciples who had forsaken father, mother, sister, brother, all for His sake, to wander only among strangers. What sweetness it would have for those pilgrim disciples sent forth to brave the enmities of the world without purse or scrip. At that moment they were

in sorrow. What word or idea will suit the occasion like "Home." They were in no mood for magnitudes as "kingdom" and "city." "Home" is sweetest to the distressed pilgrim. The best of earth is associated with "home." We must go back to home for the blessed memories of our innocence. The most beautiful love is native there. "Tis the temple of our sweetest confidences; the bulwark against danger; the asylum for missing affection; what sorrows and cares fly for succour to this hiding place." There the heart-strained and weary find relaxation and rest. (b) *The Temple aspect.* "Home and Temple," happy conjunction of ideas and interests! Sentient and spiritual nature mated with their distinct felicities. This temple aspect gives the finishing touch to the aspect domestic, viz.:—the heavenly family devoted to the highest service of the Father in heaven. Again, in the idea "home" we only hear the beating of the lower pulses, but in the Temple idea we hear the throbbing of our greater nature; also in the "Home" we see more of the hand providing, correcting, defending, but in the Temple He lifts the cloud, rends the veil, revealing Himself to the confiding, worshipping heart. In the Temple-Home He will perfect all previous disclosures of Himself. "We shall see the King in His beauty," &c. "Face to face." No intervening cloud. No darkened glass. No memories of guilt, or unfaithful love, or poor service, shall choke the voice of praise. No uprisings of unbelief shall disturb the heart, or cover the worshipper with shame. Gratitude shall not lag shamefully in the wake of Fatherly mercies. Let homes of earth partake more of the Temple, and there will be fewer sins, fewer sighs.

III.—THE INDICATION GIVEN OF THE ASSURED GLORY OF HEAVEN. The pledge of this is to be found in, "I go to prepare a place." He who makes this declaration, "prepared" the world we now live in (chapter 1st, and 3rd verse). This terrestrial then furnishes us with hints of the exceeding glory of the celestial. With sentient nature awake to, and appreciative of the ample glories of this time-dwelling, how richly are we furnished for judging of the fadeless beauty of the world to come! How numberless, how astonishing, are the glories of this! What forms, colours, sounds, scents, &c. With our Bible and books of

science in our hands, how are we astonished at His preparation of our present abode. What fixing of zones, seas, and continents! What a balancing of temperatures! What accumulation of resources! How complex and subtle the relation of the parts. If this sphere of His mercy and wrath, tenderness and severity, is so beautiful, what shall be the splendour of the sphere of His holiness? What the glory of the presence chamber, judged by the excellence of this distant boundary lodge!

“The earth is decked wi’ flowers, mony-tinted, fresh, and gay,  
The birdies warble blithely, for my Father made them sae;  
But these sights an’ these sounds will as naething be to me,  
When I hear the angels singing in my ain countrie.”

Do not miss the other echo of the word “Prepare.” He sees some ideal quality in those for whom He is preparing the mansion. His disciples loved Him; behold their sorrow. Do we love Him? We cannot go up to that Temple Home from these homes of prayerlessness and wrong doing. Prepare!

Practical Lessons. (1) *Veritable comfort*. The disciples were distressed. This announcement, this revelation was their cheer. When one mortal joy is quenched, we usually seize upon another that will as speedily fail. Jesus would have us turn in our joys and sorrows to the ample and imperishable felicities of the “Father’s house.” (2) *The uses of sorrow*. It is not always that we are in the humour to attend Divine calls, gaze upon Divine perfections, devote ourselves to Divine service, or that we are sensible of a nature spiritual, or destiny eternal. The flesh unhinges us. Mammon and the world monopolize our time and heart. In sorrow we are susceptible of Divine impressions, and open to revelations. Many first believed in Heaven under the stress of trial and grief. Its form of beauty fell upon the vision opened by the carking care of earth. Its first note of music fell upon the ear amidst the sighs of our common lot.

MORPETH.

JOHN HOGG.



## The Burden of Enlightenment.

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"THE BURDEN WHICH HABAKKUK THE PROPHET DID SEE. O LORD, HOW LONG SHALL I CRY, AND THOU WILT NOT HEAR! EVEN CRY OUT UNTO THEE OF VIOLENCE, AND THOU WILT NOT SAVE! WHY DOST THOU SHEW ME INIQUITY, AND CAUSE ME TO BEHOLD GRIEVANCE? FOR SPOILING AND VIOLENCE ARE BEFORE ME," &c.—*Hab. i. 1-4.* •

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THE light of Divine favour bestowed upon Habakkuk was the cause of much perplexity of mind and distress of soul to him. This paradox is common in Christian experience. "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Jesus, the Centre and Source of perfect peace and joy, was a "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Paul speaks of himself "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things." The message of "glad tidings of great joy" is a *cross*. The prophet's mission of mercy was a *burden* to himself.

### I.—A BURDEN OF ENLIGHTENMENT.

He was (1) *a spectator of evil*, looking upon the great and terrible disorders that devastated his country. Many persons live without realizing the evils that surround them. Workers of iniquity are often unconscious of the hatefulness of their own ways, and the vileness of their associations. The prophet was (2) *an inspired spectator of evil*. "God shewed him iniquity," &c. Being pardoned, purified, and approved of God he was led hither and thither in the path of service that he might see the greatness of the work to be done in saving the people. To see, in the light of Heaven, the fearful ramifications of evil in society is an essential condition of Christian service. But the worker must be marble and not mud in order to escape contamination. Hell is upon earth. Myriads of our fellow creatures are blinded, bound, cursed by sin, and hurrying downwards to perdition. Our fatherland groans beneath the curse of lust, drunkenness, poverty, crime, oppression and irreligion. God would have His

servants see it all; they may not turn from the sickening spectacle, for the light of Heaven shines along their way of life. Mark the effect of this Divine revelation of iniquity. The prophet was (3) *a troubled spectator of evil*. His heart-strings vibrated with jarring discords at the touch of the workers of iniquity. Knowing and loving the true and right he was constrained to protest against error and wrong. The Christian soldier must wield "the sword of the spirit," and wage war to the death against sin, whatever the consequences may be to himself. But, alas, the battle is long, the enemy is strong, and a sense of feebleness steals into the warrior's heart. What can one man do, what can all the servants of God do to purge England from her sins? Even our Imperial Parliament, and officers of justice are powerless to cope with the gigantic and deep-rooted evils which darken and desolate the land. To purify England would be to destroy her. There is One only who can slay the foe, fell the upas tree, stem the torrent, and roll back the floods of iniquity, even the Lord our God; to Him we turn, as Habakkuk turned to Him; but he found

## II.—A BURDEN OF PRAYER.

With a vivid consciousness of God's almighty power the prophet called upon Him to interpose and save the people. But days rolled on and lengthened into months, and still evil abounded. Even the power of prayer failed to remove the burden of enlightenment. The more earnest the prayer, the more lurid and fearful became the spectacle of evil. *O, the burden of prayers unheard!* "How long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear?" Why are the heavens as brass, and my prayers shut out from God? Am I destitute of the power of prayer. Nay; for Thou hast heard some of my pleadings; then, why not these? "Has God forgotton to be gracious? are His mercies clean gone for ever?" *O the burden of unanswered prayers!* Long years have some of God's children cried that the enemy may be cast out, but he stalks through the land with undiminished power. "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not save?" *O the burden of delay!* The heart grows sick with hope deferred. Must I die and the enemy still live and desolate the

earth? "O God, forsake me not, until I have shewed Thy strength unto this generation." Alas, it may not be; for "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth." What Divine meaning, then, and what gracious purpose is there in this burden of enlightenment imposed by God upon His servants? Why does He shew them iniquity, and cause them to behold grievance? It is

III.—A BURDEN OF DISCIPLINE, designed as a (1) test to see if they will *continue to work* and witness for God. To see also if they will still (2) *trust* in the Lord, even in the presence of the great mystery of iniquity; and let Him govern His own world in His own way; and despite wrong, pain, sorrow, and sin unavenged, and unrepressed, believe that the Judge of all does what is right, and wise, and good; that He is a God of love and mercy, here upon earth, and here in the future, notwithstanding. Hence the burden is for (3) *training*, that God's servants may become strong in faith, giving glory to God. Be it ours, then, to labour on, for, though we may not be able to mark progress, the mountain of evil is being removed, as it were, by spadefuls, and the temple of righteousness is rising stone by stone, the end shall come, and the shout ring through the universe—"It is finished," "grace, grace unto it."

KINGSWOOD, BRISTOL.

JOSEPH WILLCOX.

"The only way to regenerate the world is to do the duty which lies nearest to us, and not to hunt after grand, far-fetched ones for ourselves. If each drop of rain chose where it should fall, God's showers would not fall as they do now on the evil and on the good alike."—CANON KINGSLEY.

*Homiletical Commentary.*

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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“The Little Member.”

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Chapter iii. 3-6.—“BEHOLD, WE PUT BITS IN THE HORSES’ MOUTHS, THAT THEY MAY OBEY US; AND WE TURN ABOUT THEIR WHOLE BODY. BEHOLD ALSO THE SHIPS, WHICH THOUGH THEY BE SO GREAT, AND ARE DRIVEN OF FIERCE WINDS, YET ARE THEY TURNED ABOUT WITH A VERY SMALL HELM, WHITHERSOEVER THE GOVERNOR LISTETH. EVEN SO THE TONGUE IS A LITTLE MEMBER, AND BOASTETH GREAT THINGS. BEHOLD, HOW GREAT A MATTER A LITTLE FIRE KINDLETH! AND THE TONGUE IS A FIRE, A WORLD OF INIQUITY: SO IS THE TONGUE AMONG OUR MEMBERS, THAT IT DEFILETH THE WHOLE BODY, AND SETTETH ON FIRE THE COURSE OF NATURE; AND IT IS SET ON FIRE OF HELL.”

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“NOT to offend in word,” in any circumstances, under any provocation, is to have the tongue bridled; to have the tongue bridled is to have the whole body under control,—its passions, affections, desires. For example, the rider has the control of the bit or bridle in the horse’s mouth, and having this control he makes the animal carry him wherever he chooses to go; the pilot has the control of the helm, and having this control he turns about the ship whithersoever he listeth: in like manner the man who has the full control of his tongue is able to bridle, to keep under, the whole body. The horse in its native state is an ungovernable creature, but let a man once succeed in getting the bit in its mouth and the reins in his hands and it will soon be subjected altogether to his will. The ship, the great ship, exposed to the raging of the waves would be utterly at their mercy but



for the helm in the pilot's hands ; with this the huge bulk in the most tempestuous seas is guided safely to the desired haven. A man with an ungovernable tongue, whose tongue is **suppress, not express.** at the mercy of, and must just speak out the uppermost feeling or passion that is working within him ; this man is like the horse which has run away with the bit, like the ship which refuses to answer to the helm, the rider, the crew, completely at their mercy. On the other hand, the man who can keep down the rising passion, who can at least so far *suppress* it as not to *express* it, who appreciates the wisdom of silence and who has determined that this shall be *his* wisdom, who knows that a word once spoken cannot be recalled, no matter the pain it may occasion or the unavailable regret, this man shows the result of the training wherewith he has trained himself, in his power to control his whole body, his whole lower nature, everything in him which needs to be controlled.

Not, indeed, that every man, without exception, needs to exercise such stern repression ; not that all men are so given to the licence of the tongue ; there are men in whom the spirit of love and thoughtfulness for others has been so truly the moulding principle of the life, that it would be to do violence to their natures to utter a word that would pain their fellow man. Looking on their conduct from the outside we might be apt to attribute it to mean-spiritedness ; might judge them as lacking in manly self-assertion ; might uncharitably insinuate that it was from fear of men. It would be highly unjust ; they are equally high-spirited, manly, fearless, with ourselves : they act as they do because the law of kindness is written on their hearts, because they partake of His spirit, of whom it is written, " His voice was not heard in the streets " ; " When He was reviled, He reviled not again. " There are such, and the more thoroughly Christian men become the more will they be such, and the more of such will there be. And it is well to remember that the terrible picture the apostle here draws of some is not true of all ; that while it is sadly and widely true that there is " that speaketh like the piercing of a sword, " that " an ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is a

Not everybody  
needs  
the rebuke.

burning fire"; it is to be gladly acknowledged that there are many who answer to the description of the wise man,—“The tongue of the just is as choice silver; the lips of the wise is health; a wholesome tongue is a tree of life.” The apostle has some hard things to say about the tongue. Let no one diminish from them for they are true. It is he who has something to say about the “good conversation” which manifests the wisdom that is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and of good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

In the passage for exposition, the apostle is enforcing the statement that if a man can control his tongue, it is sufficient proof that he can control his whole body. The illustrations of the  
**The power is there.** bridle and the helm imply the power of the tongue, and in any exposition of the words this idea of the

power of the tongue ought not to be overlooked. Still this does not seem to be the primary aim of the apostle in drawing attention to it. Rather would it appear that, assuming this incalculable power of the tongue, he is eager to show his readers that this power must be put under their control, and to convince them that

**To be controlled.** if *it* were controlled there would be nothing more to control. It is the “bit” which really controls the horse,—get the control of the bit and you have got the control of the horse; it is the “helm” which really controls the ship,—get control of the helm and you have got control of the ship; it is the “tongue” which, in a very real and terrible sense, governs the body,—get control of the tongue, and if you get that control and keep it, if you offend not in word, you are a perfect man. Observe, the “bridle” and the “helm” are illustrations to cast light upon, they are not arguments to prove what the apostle has here before him. The fitness of the illustrations will be missed if we try to harden them into arguments. The “bit” is a small

**Illustrations with the force of arguments.** member, so is the “helm,” so is the “tongue.” Great things are done by the “bit,” by the “helm,” by the “tongue.” Yes, but if you are to have the control of the great things which the tongue does, you must have the control of the tongue itself, just as in the case of bit or

bridle. The illustrations are not arguments; they do not prove the apostle's assertion, but they cast very vivid light upon it, and this is what he is using them for; and if we would but take home the lessons, and let them be in us powers of the world to come in governing that little member of which it is said life and death are in its power, the purpose of the apostle, in writing these things, so far as we are concerned, would be fulfilled.

But more than this, the control of the tongue is not only the evidence, it is through the control of it that we gain the control of the whole body. For a man to set a watch upon his lips, to resolve with the Psalmist that he will not sin with his tongue, is to set himself against, shall we say, *all* sin? How varied the iniquities of which the tongue is the instrument! **Not only evidence but efficiency.** Impure words, insincere words, murderous, blasphemous, irreverent, God-defying words. Take the ten commandments and see how easily every one of them may be broken by the tongue! Suppose a man then to set a watch upon his lips, what a reacting effect this would have upon the impulses of the will as upon the affections of the heart. Impure thoughts would be crushed down and crushed out, insincerities would die away; for that which is not allowed expression, whereas, in the Christian life, contrary things are nourished, must naturally give way and eventually perish.

The apostle now passes on to the more general thought of the *power* of the tongue, and specially of its power for evil: "even so the tongue is a little member, and" not "boasteth great things," but doeth great things, effects great things, actually worketh out the things of which, by-and-bye, it boasteth, as indeed it is so often wont to do. The apostle has been speaking of the great things the "bit" and the "helm" can do; it is natural to speak of the great things the "tongue" can do, of the great evil things the tongue can do: natural, because it does do such evil things, because it is just these evil things he is seeking to warn his readers against. And what evil the tongue can do, what destructive influence it wields, what power to lay waste! "*Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire.*" Rather: "Behold, how much wood; behold, how

great a forest a little fire kindleth." In Doré's "Illustrations of Life and Adventure in America," there is a picture of the very thing the apostle speaks of. It is a forest on fire; you see the flames, the clouds, and columns of smoke; you hear the crackling of the mighty branches as the tongues of flame leap up to them; you see the denizens of the forest fleeing in terror from before the destruction. How has it all happened? A spark from the embers of the camp-fire of some travellers; the wind took it up, cast it among the dry grass, and the mischief was done! What a world of mischief the tongue can work; a spark from that is enough to set on fire the course of nature, yea, to defile, to blacken all that it sets on fire! How it breaks up families and friendships; how it rends asunder congregations and communities; how it inflames, to festering, the wounds that left alone would heal, setting on fire the course of nature! When a man has uttered an imprudent or unkind or cruel word, and has had time and grace to reflect upon what he has done, what a fire he feels in his own soul, irritating and inflaming; he cannot settle to work, and he cannot rest; how can he when he has prepared the combustibles with his tongue which his conscience has set on fire! It is at times like these, how terribly true the proverb, "a word once spoken can never be recalled." The most pathetic pages of literature are those which tell the unavailing regrets of those who, by hasty and bitter words, have severed friends, breaking up the goodly fellowships for ever.

It is "a world of iniquity," it sets "on fire the course of nature,"—the course of a man's life, from its beginning to its close,—it defiles "the whole body, and it is set on fire of hell." This is a terrible expression, and if it had not been in the Word of God, if it had not been the utterance of an inspired man, we dare not have used it! These bitter and cruel words, these malicious and murderous words that men speak, they think they are but words and cannot be so very evil! There is no depth of evil deeper; they are of a piece with the character and conduct of him who was a liar and a murderer, an accuser and a slanderer from the beginning. They think they may be justified in uttering



words that stab and pain, that they do well to be thus angry :  
 let them see to it very carefully that they are not  
 inspired by the spirit of him they would not like to  
 own as their inspiration. If they do thus make  
 sure, they will, in the very act, put out the fire which is ready to  
 set them on fire, and they will not be defiled or destroyed by it ;  
 they will escape the wiles of the tempter who lies in wait to  
 deceive just here, where he often succeeds in tempting men to  
 their ruin, in getting them to give the reins to their  
 tongue. "Let us set a watch before our mouth," let  
 us keep "the door of our lips," and the more and the longer we do  
 this the less power will the spirit of evil have over us, and we  
 shall be of those who sin not with our tongue.

We all offend in many things ; we each offend in one thing.  
 Would it not be a very heaven upon earth where in a family, in  
 a church, among friends, nobody offended in word ?  
 It is very simple ; it lies in the control of the  
 tongue ! The "reins" are love to God and love to  
 man, and these "reins" are put into the hands of  
 every man who receives the Gospel of the grace of God in truth.  
 And so we come to the Gospel which is the power of God unto  
 self-control to all them that believe.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

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WASTE.—"The most unprofitable waste of all is in connection with the  
 use of gunpowder, in which nitrogen, owing to its great gaseous elasticity,  
 is the most important factor. . . . The vast scale upon which war is  
 conducted in these times necessitates an extraordinary expenditure of  
 gunpowder. Ten million pounds of combined nitrogen are, in this way,  
 yearly withdrawn from the world's available fertilising resources, which, if  
 translated into human food, would mean the destruction, in advance, of  
 no less than five hundred millions of pounds of bread. This is a new  
 argument against war, the cogency of which will be appreciated more and  
 more as the years go on."—HUGH MACMILLAN.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM  
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

## No. I.

## Aspects of Human History.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST, WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, TO SHEW UNTO HIS SERVANTS THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS AND HE SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT BY HIS ANGEL UNTO HIS SERVANT JOHN; WHO BARE RECORD OF THE WORD OF GOD, AND OF THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST, AND OF ALL THINGS THAT HE SAW. BLESSED IS HE THAT READETH, AND THEY THAT HEAR THE WORDS OF THIS PROPHECY, AND KEEP THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE WRITTEN THEREIN: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND."—*Revelation* i. 1-3.

HUMAN history seems to be presented here as a revelation, a record, and a study.

I.—As a REVELATION. "*The revelation of Jesus Christ.*" Αποκαλυψις. Ιησου. Χριστου. To reveal means to uncover, to disclose. A revelation is an unveiling of the hidden. Whatever has not appeared, whether

things or persons are hidden or concealed from view. There are as yet hidden universes. There is only one Being in immensity that can reveal such things, because He sees them, and that is God. Hence all that is known of "*things which must shortly come to pass,*" or, indeed, things that

will ever come to pass, is "*the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.*" Observe that the revelation is *Divine*. Who can reveal the unseen and unknown but God? Christ was once unknown. He revealed Him. His advent to earth was a revelation of Himself to mankind. No one can reveal God but Christ, and no one can reveal Christ but God. But the *object* to which the revelation here refers, is not any particular person, Divine or human, but the *future history of mankind*. This is hidden. "We know not what shall be on the morrow." "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." He reveals the future history of mankind in two ways.

First: By *disclosing its essential principles*. All the events of human conduct are caused and controlled by two principles, Good and Evil. All human actions are traceable to one of these, and they are in constant conflict. The colossal image and the little stone, grace and truth, are ever here on this planet battling in human souls throughout the

race. These principles Christ hath revealed, not merely in His teachings, but in His agony and bloody sweat. They shone out in lightning, and shone out in thunder on the ghastly heights of Golgotha. He who understands these opposing principles can foretell all human history.

He who thoroughly knows the laws of material nature can tell to the hour when a comet will sweep the heavens, when the tide will overstep its boundaries, when celestial eclipses will occur; and he who duly appreciates the force and tendency of these opposing moral principles will not greatly mistake in his auguries of the future of the race. "That which hath been is now, and that which is will be." He reveals the future history of mankind—

Secondly: By the *dispensations of Providence*. Christ is the Manager and Master of all human events. He is in all events, they are His *comings* to men. His advents, and present events are types and prophecies of the future. In this age the future can be seen, as in the buds and blossoms of this spring you

may see the buds and blossoms of springs to come. Look at human history—

## II.—As a RECORD.

First: Here is *a commission from heaven* to record certain things. "*He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the of God.*" "Messenger is the literal translation of ἀγγέλων and makes sense everywhere, which 'angel' does not, for the 'thorn in the flesh' was not an angel." No one can tell who the angel or messenger was: probably Christ Himself. A "*revelation*" is one thing, a "*record*" another. What we call the Bible is not a "*revelation*," but the "*record*" of a "*revelation*." The things to be revealed are "*Things which must shortly come to pass.*" What we call Providence is never at rest, its wheels are ever in motion. In the case of every man, family, community, nation, there are things that "*must shortly come to pass.*" Those things continue from period to period and from age to age, and however differing in form are identical in spirit. These all deserve "*record.*" They are all streams from an inex-

haustible fountain of life, branches from an eternal root of being. Things of the future grow out of the present by the eternal law of evolution. Countless generations will come and go; new revelations will have to be recorded. And thus the Bibles of the race will multiply through all time.

Secondly: Here is a commission from heaven, to reveal certain things, addressed to a man. "*His servant John.*" He is a man. Men, not angels, are to be the chroniclers of the Divine for man. John is here the commissioned chronicler. He was in all likelihood the same disciple whom Jesus loved, the author of the Gospel bearing his name, and he to whom the Saviour, on the cross, entrusted His beloved mother.

Thirdly: Here is a commission from heaven, to record certain things, addressed to a man of the highest moral class. He is here called His "*servant*," the servant of God,—His willing, loving, loyal servant. In his Gospel he had borne "*record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*" Heaven commissions



men to record the things that are "coming to pass," and the men to do it are men in thorough sympathy with the true, the beautiful, and the good. Moral goodness is an essential qualification of a true historian. Look at human history—

III.—As a STUDY. The "revelation" is given, the "record" is made, and now comes study. "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.*" Observe—

First: That *historic events are of moral significance*. There is a Divine meaning in everything that is either produced or permitted by the All-wise and the All-good. There is not a circumstance that transpires in our individual life that does not say to us, "Thus saith the Lord." Observe—

Secondly: That the *moral significance involves a Divine law*. Apart from its element to excite feeling, rouse the imagination, and stimulate

speculative thought, it contains law. Hence it is not only said here "*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words,*" but they that "*keep those things that are written therein.*" The moral lessons which historic events teach are Divine laws, and come on the subject of them with binding force. Observe—

Thirdly: That in *practical obedience to this Divine law there is true happiness*. "*Blessed is he.*" "We then," says an able expositor, "as living actors in the world, have not only to read and hear, but to keep,—keep in mind and action those principles which preside over the development of all human history." "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." He, and he only, who incarnates the great moral principles of history brings sunshine and music into his soul.

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SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF  
THE KINGS.

## A Nation's Calamities, Counsellor and God.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN KING HEZEKIAH HEARD IT, HE  
RENT HIS CLOTHES," &c.—2 *Kings* xix. 1-37.

OUR purpose in our sketches on this Book has not allowed us to enquire into all the minute particulars of the characters or events recorded, or into the authorship of the book, or into the right of the prophet or prophets so frequently to say, "Thus saith the Lord,"—but simply in the briefest way to develope for practical purposes the truths either expressed or suggested. In this chapter we have three momentous events recorded—the terrible calamity to which Jerusalem was exposed, the utter destruction of the Assyrian army, and the death of Sennacherib the Assyrian despot. The whole should be read in connection with Isaiah xxxvii. We have here for notice four subjects of thought—the exposure of a nation to an overwhelming calamity, the blessing to a nation of a ruler

who looks to heaven for help, the advantage to a nation of a truly wise counsellor, and the strength of a nation that has the true God on its side.

I.—THE EXPOSURE OF A NATION TO AN OVERWHELMING CALAMITY.

First: The *nature* of the threatened calamity. It was the invasion of the king of Assyria. This was announced in startling terms and in a haughty and ruthless spirit by Rab-shakeh. "*Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations delivered them*

*which my fathers have destroyed?"* (verses 10-13) The danger was near at hand. Sennacherib was on his way with his one hundred and four-score and five thousand battalions. The tramlings of the war-horses and the rattling of the armour might, perhaps, have been heard by the men of Jerusalem. Nothing but their utter destruction was contemplated, and seemed rapidly approaching. In a far worse position was the kingdom of Judah at this moment than was England when the Spanish Armada was approaching our shores. Observe—

Secondly: The *influence* of the threatened calamity. (1) It struck the kingdom with a crushing terror. *"And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard it, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household; and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble"* (verses 1-3). The rending of

the "*clothes*" and the arraying in "*sackcloth*" were symbols to express the horror of the heart. (2) It struck the kingdom with a helpless feebleness. *"This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth"* (v. 3). "The image is that of a parturient woman whose strength is exhausted, whose powers are paralysed, at the moment when she required to put forth a vigorous effort. The expression in which the message was conveyed to the prophet described, by a strong figure, the desperate condition of the kingdom, together with their utter inability to help themselves; and it intimated also a hope that the blasphemous defiance of Jehovah's power by the impious Assyrian, might lead to some direct interposition for the vindication of His honour and supremacy to all heathen gods." Here is utter national helplessness in a terrible national calamity. Notice—

II.—THE BLESSING TO A NATION OF A RULER WHO LOOKS TO HEAVEN FOR HELP. What, in the wretched con-

dition of his country, does king Hezekiah do? He invokes the merciful interposition of heaven. When Rab-shakeh and other messengers came to Hezekiah with a threatening letter from the king of Assyria (see verses 10-13), what did the monarch do? He took it into the house of the Lord and there prayed. *"And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord. And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said, O Lord God of Israel," &c.* (verses 14-19.) In this wonderful prayer (1) He adores the God whom Sennacherib had blasphemed. He addresses Him as the *"God of all the kingdoms of the earth,"* the Maker of *"heaven and earth,"* the one and only Lord. (2) He implores the Almighty for His own sake to deliver the country. *"Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech Thee, save Thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the Lord God, even Thou only."* "The best pleas in prayer," says an old author,

"are those that are taken from God's own honour, therefore the Lord's prayer begins with 'Hallowed be Thy name,' and concludes, 'Thine be the glory.'"

Who is the greatest human king? Not the man who relies on his own power and skill to protect his nation from danger, and seeks to forward it to the possession and enjoyment of its rights; nor the king who looks to his armies and navies in time of need: but he who practically realises his dependence upon the "Lord" that made heaven and earth. Reverence for the Infinite is the soul of true royalty. Notice—

III.—THE ADVANTAGE TO A NATION OF A TRULY WISE COUNSELLOR. Whether Isaiah was a divinely inspired man, and had a right in any especial sense to say, "Thus saith the Lord," or not, he may be fairly taken in this case as the representative of a wise Counsellor, and that for two reasons:—

First: He looked to heaven rather than to earth for his wisdom. *"Then Isaiah the Son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah saying, Thus saith the Lord*



*God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib, King of Assyria, I have heard. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning him.*" (verses 20, 21.) The counsel which he had to give he here declares to have come from the Lord God of Israel. How the wisdom was conveyed to him, whether by an outward voice, or an inner vision, does not appear; he had it from heaven. He only is the true Counsellor of men who gets his wisdom from above. Whence do the advisers of sovereigns get their instructions? From hoary precedences or the fallible conclusions of their own feeble minds; and not directly from above. Hence the incessant blunders of political Cabinets, and the scandal in these days of one political party denouncing the blunders and professing to correct the national mistakes of the other.

Secondly: What he received from heaven he communicated to men. In the communication (1) "Sennacherib is apostrophised in a highly poetic strain admirably des-

criptive of the turgid vanity, haughty pretensions, and heartless impiety of this despot. '*The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee,*' &c. (verses 21-28.) (2) Hezekiah himself is personally addressed, and a sign given him of coming deliverance. He is told that for two years the presence of the enemy would interrupt the peaceful pursuits of husbandry, but in the third year the people would be in circumstances to till the earth, plant the vineyards, and reap the fruits, as formerly. '*And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof,*' &c. (verses 29-31.) (3) The issue of Sennacherib's invasion is announced. '*Thus saith the Lord concerning the King of Assyria, he shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before*

*it with shield, nor cast a bank against it. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return,' &c. (verses 32-34.)"*—

*Dr. Jamieson.* Such was the communication which in language passionate, poetic, and powerful, Isaiah made to this perplexed and terrified nation. It involves two things (a) The deliverance of his country; (b) The ruin of the despot. Notice—

IV.—THE STRENGTH OF A NATION THAT HAS GOD ON ITS SIDE. Who delivered the imperilled nation? Who overwhelmed the despot? "*The zeal of the Lord of hosts.*" "*And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses,*" &c. (verses 35-37.) Who was the "*angel of the Lord*"? Was it some transcendent personality, or some tremendous force in nature, such as a pestiferous blast, or an electric bolt? It matters not; the "*angel*" was but the instrument in the hand of God.

First: How swiftly was the deliverance effected. "*That night.*" What a night was that, one of the most memorable nights of the world. Perhaps the whole was effected even in one single hour, or even in one instant of that night.

Secondly: How terrible the ruin which that deliverance effected,—"*An hundred fourscore and five thousand men*" destroyed. In the morning the men of Jerusalem looked out terribly, apprehending a vision of the assembled hosts of destruction, but lo, they were not.

"Like the leaves of the forests when summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn has blown,  
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown."

How rapidly Providence can do His work; He can annihilate a universe in the twinkling of an eye. Behold a mystery! Why should these one hundred and eighty-five thousand be thus destroyed on account of the conduct of one man—Sennacherib? "God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain." The 46th

Psalm is supposed to be the triumphant outburst of the delivered people. "God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.

. . . The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: He uttered His voice, the earth melted." This Sennacherib, this ruthless despot, does not seem to have fallen with the others. His body was not found amongst the mangled corpses. Albeit he did not escape. "*So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and*

*went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his God, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead."* (verses 36, 37.) What greater calamity could befall a man than to be murdered by his own sons?

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#### CHRIST AS THE LIGHT AMONG US.

No one can mistake the problems which the present generation is called to face. There are the trials of poverty worn by the struggle for bare existence. . . . There is the separation of class from class. . . . There is the concentration of the population in crowded towns. . . . There is the exaggerated extension of empires, which brings as its necessary consequences the crushing burden of military expenditure, and at the same time lessens the responsibility of the individual citizen.

. . . There is the impatient questioning of old beliefs, which gives an unreal value to the appeal to authority, and casts suspicion on sympathetic efforts to meet doubt. But to meet all these dark problems our light—the Light of Life—is unexhausted and inexhaustible."—CANON WESTCOTT.

## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

No. V.

## Genuine Morality.

"BUT SPEAK THOU THE THINGS WHICH BECOME SOUND DOCTRINE: THAT THE AGED MEN BE SOBER, GRAVE, TEMPERATE, SOUND IN FAITH, IN CHARITY, IN PATIENCE. THE AGED WOMEN LIKEWISE, THAT THEY BE IN BEHAVIOUR AS BECOMETH HOLINESS, NOT FALSE ACCUSERS, NOT GIVEN TO MUCH WINE, TEACHERS OF GOOD THINGS; THAT THEY MAY TEACH THE YOUNG WOMEN TO BE SOBER, TO LOVE THEIR HUSBANDS, TO LOVE THEIR CHILDREN, TO BE DISCREET, CHASTE, KEEPERS AT HOME, GOOD, OBEDIENT TO THEIR OWN HUSBANDS, THAT THE WORD OF GOD BE NOT BLASPHEMED. YOUNG MEN LIKEWISE EXHORT TO BE SOBER MINDED. IN ALL THINGS SHEWING THYSELF A PATTERN OF GOOD WORKS: IN DOCTRINE SHEWING UNCORRUPTNESS, GRAVITY, SINCERITY, SOUND SPEECH, THAT CANNOT BE CONDEMNED; THAT HE THAT IS OF THE CONTRARY PART MAY BE ASHAMED, HAVING NO EVIL THING TO SAY OF YOU. EXHORT SERVANTS TO BE OBEDIENT UNTO THEIR OWN MASTERS, AND TO PLEASE THEM WELL IN ALL THINGS; NOT ANSWERING AGAIN; NOT PURLOINING, BUT SHEWING ALL GOOD FIDELITY; THAT THEY MAY ADORN THE DOCTRINE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR IN ALL THINGS."—*Titus* ii. 1-10.

PAUL, having given Titus directions as to the organisation of a Christian church in Crete, and charged him to contend against those who, in the name of Christianity, propagated doctrines at variance both with the truths and the spirit of the Gospel, here urges that *genuine morality* which should be the grand aim and tendency of all Gospel preaching.

The grand subject presented in this passage is *genuine morality*. There have been, and still are, those who regard morality and religion as two distinct subjects or lines of conduct, but they are essentially one, one cannot exist without the other. The essence of both consists in supreme regard to the Divine will as the only standard of character and rule of life.



From these verses we may draw three general truths in relation to this subject.

I.—Genuine morality LEGISLATES ALIKE FOR ALL MANKIND.

It speaks to man authoritatively, whatever his personal peculiarities, adventitious distinctions, social relations, secular circumstances, official position, the number of his years, or the characteristics of his country. Moral law meets him everywhere, he can no more escape it than he can the atmosphere he breathes. In these words persons are mentioned distinguished by three fundamental facts.

First: The fact of *age*. Amongst the millions of the race, not many in any generation can be found that came into existence exactly at the same minute. Hence there are those differing in age from one year to a hundred or more. Hence Paul speaks here of "*aged men*" and "*aged women*," "*young men*" and "*young women*." At the first dawn of moral consciousness, up to the last breath of earthly existence, the voice of duty speaks—"Thus saith the Lord." No one has strength enough to extricate himself

from the ties of moral obligation. Not even that mighty spirit who leads the "world captive at his will," can break the shackles of moral responsibility.

Secondly: The fact of *sex*. Here are "*men*" and "*women*," both the aged and the young. However closely identified in affection and interest, moral duty treats each as a distinct personality. In human legislation the obligation of the woman, in some cases, is absorbed in that of the man. Not so with the moral legislation of Heaven. Each must bear its own burden. Inasmuch as the woman is as bound to follow the will of God, as the man, no man has a right to interfere with the freedom of her thought, the dictates of her conscience, or the independency of her devotions. For long ages men have not recognised this fact, and they have treated women as their toys of pleasure and instruments of gratification. Women are beginning to wake up to their rights, and the day of man's tyranny is drawing to a close.

Thirdly: The fact of *relationship*. Paul says, "*Exhort*

*servants to be obedient unto their own masters.*" Why the duty of servants should be here referred to and not that of masters, is not because masters have not their duty, but, perhaps, at this time in Crete there were slaves who were disloyal and rebellious. Whilst the duty of servants is here referred to, the fact must not be overlooked that morality is binding on men in every social relationship, on the rulers as well as the ruled, the judges as well as the criminals, the parents as well as the children, the employers as well as the employés. What is wrong for one is wrong for all, and the reverse. Notice—

II.—Genuine morality REACHES TO THE SPRINGS OF THE HEART. It does not concern itself with the external conduct. "Bodily exercise profiteth but little." But as it regards external conduct as the evolutions of the states of the heart, it legislates for those states. It says: "Keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Glance at the virtues here inculcated. "*That the aged men be sober* (sober-minded), *grave, temperate.*"

The exhortation to sobriety is also addressed to aged women, "*that they be not given to much wine.*" Also to the young women, "*teach the young women to be sober,*" and to the young men, "*exhort to be sober-minded.*" Although physical sobriety is undoubtedly referred to, moral sobriety, serious thoughtfulness, and self-restraint are evidently included and regarded as fundamental. Moral sober-mindedness is the effective preventative and cure of all physical intemperance. No argument, either *for* total abstinence or *against* it, can be sustained by the phrase, "*not given to much wine.*" All the words convey is—do not get drunk. "*Sound in faith, in charity* (love), *in patience.*" This means, have a healthy faith, a faith well founded; a healthy love,—a love fastened on the supremely loveable; a healthy patience, a patience that shall bear up with fortitude and magnanimity under all the trials of life. "*As becometh holiness,*" reverent in demeanour. Let the whole life be full of that "holiness without which no man can see the Lord." "*Not*

*false accusers*," not slanderers. It has been observed that old women are specially tempted to garrulity and querulousness, hence the exhortation here. "*Teachers of good things*," of that which is good. Things good in themselves as well as in their tendencies and issues: teachers, not merely by words, but by example. "*That they may teach (train) the young women to be sober*." The expression, "*to be sober*," should be omitted. "*To love their husbands*." The duty implies that the husband is lovable; there are some men who are called husbands so morally abhorrent and disgusting, that to love them would be impossible. The ideal husband must be loved. "*To love their children*." A mother's love, of a certain kind, is proverbial. Maternal love, wrongly directed, has been one of the chief curses of the race. "*To be discreet*," sober-minded, a proper cheerfulness in mothers is a precious virtue, but volatile frivolousness is a serious evil. "*Chaste*," purity of the body, freedom from obscenity in language and life. Nothing in society is more beautiful than a

thoroughly chaste woman, chaste in language, chaste in dress, chaste in movement: and nothing is more disgusting than the reverse, a woman unclean in appearance, in costume, in language, in manners. "*Keepers (workers) at home*." Wives must work as well as husbands, work is a condition of health, and of true enjoyment. An idle wife is a bane both to herself and her family. "*At home*," this may not mean entirely in her own house, but in her own sphere, it may be in the garden, the field, the school-room, the church. "*Good*," kind, amiable, sympathetic, generous, free from all that is malign, envious, and jealous. "*Obedient (being in subjection) to their own husbands*." This implies, of course, that the husband's commands are wise, right, and useful. "*That the word of God be not blasphemed*." This refers, perhaps, to all the previous exhortations, and expresses a grand reason for the cultivation of all virtues. Our conduct in all things should be such as to bring honour rather than dishonour on our Lord and Master. "Let your light also so shine before

men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." "Young men likewise exhort to be sober-minded." Youth, in the swelling streams of its passions, the wild play of its fancy, and its craving for the romantic, is fearfully exposed to mental insobriety. Hence, no duty for the young is more urgent than that of obtaining a self-masterhood. Titus, whom Paul commands to exhort young men to this duty, was himself a comparatively young man. He could scarcely have been more than forty years of age. "Brought up in a Pagan home, not improbably in the luxurious and wicked Syrian Antioch, drawn to the Master's side in the fresh dawn of manhood, tried in many a difficult task and found faithful, the words of Titus exhorting the youth of Crete to be sober-minded or self-restrained, would be likely to have great weight." "In all things shewing thyself a pattern (ensample) of good works, in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of the contrary part may

be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (us). In order that the exhortations of Titus might have full force, Paul here addresses an admonition to him. He is to show himself a "*pattern of good works*" in all things, he is to be a model of excellence in all his relations to the men and women of Crete, both the aged and the young. He must be pure, grave, and sincere. His life must illustrate and confirm the doctrines that his lips declared. His preaching, too, should be such that could not be "*condemned*," sound, healthy, practical, not fanciful, sentimental, and morbid. Ah! how many sermons preached every Sunday, men of reason, thoughtfulness, conscience, recoil from and condemn. "*Exhort servants to be obedient* (in subjection) *to their own masters, and to please them well* (to be well pleasing to them) *in all things; not answering again* (not gainsaying); *not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity.*" Herein is enjoined on servants obedience, acquiescence, honesty, faithfulness. All this implies, of course, that the master is what he

ought to be, that his commands are righteous, that his words are truthful, and that the work he enjoins is lawful and right. "*That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.*" From this it would seem that even slaves, in righteously serving their masters, may even honour God in their humble service.

Thus, from this passage we learn that genuine morality reaches the very springs of the heart, the fountain of all actions. He is not a moral man who only acts in strictest conformity to the conventional rules of society, nor is he even a moral man who merely fulfils the letter of the Divine commands. "All these commandments have I kept from my youth up. Yet one thing thou lackest," &c. He only is the true man whose governing sympathies flow in the channels of eternal right, and whose activities are ever engaged in endeavours to please the Mighty Maker of his being. The will of God, and that only, is the datum of true ethics. Observe—

III.—Genuine morality IS  
THE GRAND PURPOSE OF GOS-

PEL TEACHING. "*But speak thou the things which become (befit) sound doctrine, that the aged men,*" &c. His teaching is to be in contrast with that of the false teachers mentioned in the previous verses, and which led to immorality of conduct. This verse, and the seventh, urging Titus, as a preacher, to be a pattern in all things, both in his teaching and his conduct, justifies the inference that the grand end of Gospel teaching is the promotion of genuine morality. In the eighth verse of the next chapter, Paul distinctly states that Titus was so to teach that his hearers might be "careful to maintain good works." This is a point which what is called the "church" has, in its teachings, practically ignored. The Gospel has been preached to sustain theologies, to establish sects, and to maintain certain institutions, ecclesiastical and political, instead of making men *morally* good, honest, faithful, and heroically loyal to the "truth as it is in Jesus."

Here, then, we have the only *infallible test of pulpit usefulness*. In what does the real utility of the pulpit con-



sist? In gathering large audiences? Any charlatan can do this; and, frequently, the greater the charlatan, the most successful. In generating in the congregation the largest amount of superficial religious sentiment? This often emasculates the reason, diseases the conscience, enervates the will, and renders the whole atmosphere of the soul insalubrious and depressing. No: but in making men *moral*, the living agents evermore of good works. I estimate a true church, not by the number of its members, the apparent earnestness of its devotions, or the amount of its contributions, but by the number of its professors who are too truthful to lie, too honest to defraud, too morally noble to do or to countenance a mean or a dishonourable act,

to whom, in short, all worldly wealth, and power, and life itself, are held cheap as dirt compared with the right. When churches are made up of such members, then, and not until then, they will command the confidence, the sympathy, the trade, and the influence of the world. Well does *Emerson* say, "There is no morality without religion, and there is no religion without morality. 'This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.' He who loves God, keeps the commandment, loves God in action. Love is obedience in the heart, obedience is love in the life. Morality is religion in practice, religion is morality in principle."

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SACERDOTALISM.—"When the Apostle says that the word of the Reconciliation has been committed to us, he tells us we are trustees; and our safety consists, perhaps, in dwelling on the responsibilities of a great trust rather than any other aspect of our office. A conscientious trustee thinks first of the interests committed to him, next of the office which he fills as guarding them, least of all of himself. A conscientious clergyman will think more of his office than of his person, but he will also take less account of the office than of his work. After all, the first is only a means, the last is the end."—CANON LIDDON.

## Seedlings.

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### Days of the Christian Year.

**Matt. iv. 4.**

*(The First Sunday in Lent.)*

THIS passage will always be peculiarly interesting as one that rendered essential service to the Redeemer of mankind at one of the critical points of His career. That which we speak of as "the temptation" was undoubtedly a time of test and trial. One mistake here and the battle would have been lost, the mission a disastrous failure. We do well, therefore, to attach a special value to any words which aided the Struggling One to pass unscathed and victorious through so eventful, so decisive a conflict. They teach us the two-fold lesson:—

I.—THAT GOD HAS OTHER WAYS OF PROVIDING FOR OUR BODILY NECESSITIES THAN THOSE WHICH ARE APPARENT TO OUR SENSES. The Divine Father could have had recourse to other measures for sustaining the physical nature of His Son than the ordinary and apparent one of feeding Him with bread, even as He showed himself unlimited by ordinary resources when His people had to be sustained in the wilderness. So, now, with us: it may appear as if there

were only one way out of our temporal difficulty, and we may be disposed, in our hope and in our prayer, to prescribe this course to our Heavenly Father. But we must not thus limit Him. He has ways of fulfilling His promise to us (ch. vi. 33) which lie outside the view we take of our necessities; other means of providing for our livelihood; other sources of satisfaction with which to comfort us; another path altogether along which to lead us. We are not to limit the Omniscient in our thought as to the way in which He will deliver us from our trouble and meet the necessities which confront us as citizens of this present world.

II.—THAT GOD HAS OTHER WORK FOR HIS SERVANTS TO ACCOMPLISH THAN THAT OF PROVIDING FOR TEMPORAL REQUIREMENTS. Christ had "meat to eat" which the Tempter cared not for and, perhaps, knew not of. At such an hour His best food, and that which for the hour sufficed Him, was the doing the Father's work by repelling the assaults of the Evil One. There is no deeper error, no deadlier delusion which men can cherish than that of imagining that everything is done

when "the nest is feathered" and "the barns are full." Everything that is most worth doing or having may be still undone, still ungained. The man who has a large estate at his command and contents himself with keeping a little shop; the man who has a broad and deep river at his disposal and is satisfied with working his vessel (or casting his net) in a petty creek; the man who has the use of a large library and confines himself to the perusal of a poor pamphlet,—such a man is a feeble type of him who, with all that God offers him in Christ Jesus, shuts up his soul within the narrow confines of earthly interests. These cannot and do not make up human life; "man does not live by bread alone." Human life, in the Divine intention, embraces opportunities compared with which these are but "the small dust of the balance." How a man trifles with his own soul and sins against God when he satisfies—or tries to satisfy—himself with these, when God is not only offering to him but, in His abounding mercy, *pressing on him* (1) Divine truth to occupy and enlarge his mind; (2) heavenly objects—a Divine Father, an Unchanging Friend—to fill his heart; (3) sacred, ennobling work to occupy his energies.

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### Mark ix. 27.

(*The Second Sunday in Lent.*)

"JESUS TOOK HIM BY THE HAND."

NOT only in the incident before us, but frequently in His gentle and mighty works "Jesus took" some sufferer, or even some dead one "by the hand." By such an action He manifested then, and He pledges to Humanity for ever, Divine Sympathy, Simplicity, Strength. Here is the revelation and the assurance of—

I.—SYMPATHY. How could Jesus more vividly have shown sympathy than by thus taking hold of the hand of those He would bless. The blind man, the fevered woman, the agitated demoniac, would feel in that grasp of the Great Physician that there was a pity for them, a care for them that no mere word of healing could ever convey. And even as the icy hand of the corpse grew sentient in the warm clasp of Christ's hand, there would break in upon the reviving heart the consciousness of kindness and of love which is better than life itself. There is a Brotherliness in such beneficence as that of Christ. He might have gathered into ghastly groups the diseased, the maimed, the blind, the devil-posessed, the dying, and even the dead, and then, with a regal tone, or an up-lifted finger, have restored them

all to life and wholeness. But no ! One by one He healed them, and He showed as much by His touch of tenderness as by His will of might that He was the Son of the God of all comfort. Thus, indeed, in His very incarnation God has taken hold of the hand of Humanity and by sympathy becomes its Saviour.

II.—SIMPLICITY. The naturalness, the artlessness of this is very significant. It distinguished the whole of Christ's public work as well as His personal life. And it reveals the method of God in the salvation of the world. Christ takes hold of our nature, and by our hand guides us and leads us. Not by any of the wizardry of superstitions, nor by any of the overbearing force of which some theologies dream, but by dealing according to all the simplicity of spiritual law, with our (a) understanding, (b) conscience, (c) love, (d) will, does the Redeeming God direct Humanity in its blindness, heal it in its sickness, calm it in its madness, and raise it from its death.

III.—STRENGTH. The evangelist's description of Christ's method, in thus taking by the hand those who were in varying degrees of helplessness and need, clearly indicates a quiet power, a calm putting forth of strength which is very beautiful. There is

no exercise of energy that is baffled and has to try again and again to accomplish its purpose. If in the tenderness of the touch there is "the Lamb of God," in the strength of it there is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Thus is there the revelation of Him who, in all the woe and sin of the world, is "mighty to save," is "able to save to the uttermost." Often a man in his personal, or commercial, or social struggles fails because at a crisis in his life there was no one to take him by the hand. No one of all the sons of men need fail in their highest concerns on this account. For The Christ, "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love," will, with tenderest sympathy, gracious simplicity, and all sufficient strength, be the Healer and the Helper of all who put their trust in Him.

EDITOR.

### Luke xi. 14-23.

(*The Third Sunday in Lent.*)

IN the life of Christ there was a continuous conflict with the religious leaders of His day ; this conflict runs like a fierce, dark thread through the whole fabric of His public life. He and they were wider than the poles asunder. They were full of pride and haughtiness, He could say "I am meek and lowly in heart ;"

they were marked by hollowness and unreality, He was Divinely sincere and true; they were the slaves of forms and ceremonies that had become empty, He was full of the glorious freedom of life; they were wrapped up in selfishness and ambition disguised under the garb of zeal for God and righteousness, He was the Son of man, giving Himself up day by day, a sacrifice for mankind. From the outset of His life, His spirit and theirs were in perpetual antagonism. Their harmony was impossible, their hostility inevitable. They soon saw how wide and deep was the gulf between the Prophet of Nazareth and themselves. Their pride and self-love made them quick to resent the teachings and works of Christ. They marked Him out as their enemy, and as time went on their hostility grew more bitter and their hatred more fierce.

Christ had healed a dumb demoniac. The people who had no theological or ecclesiastical prejudices to warp their hearts and minds were filled with awe and reverence. The release of a man from such a horrible spell, the full restoration of such a wretched sufferer, excited the people to enthusiastic admiration; but the Pharisees and rulers felt otherwise. Already hating Him, they were only more hardened and

maddened against Him. For by such miracles He was destroying their influence. It would appear from Christ's words that there existed among the Rabbis certain forms of exorcism; and it may have been that sometimes these forms were effectual in the mildest cases; although, generally, the practice of exorcism was a pretence, a heartless trafficking in the superstition of the people. Christ was quietly striking at this system. There was a wide difference between the Rabbis and Christ in this work. They used adjurations, spells, and elaborate formulæ, it was enough for Him to exercise His will. This calm dignity and simplicity of Christ was humiliating to the Rabbis. They had little, if any, real power to heal those who were possessed; Christ could heal all, even the worst. Then, too, they made no little gain by their assumed exorcisms, and now they were in danger of being wholly discredited in the eyes of the people. All this was as fresh fuel to their already hot malignity; and in their bigotry and prejudice they attributed Christ's wonderful power to His league with the devil. He was able to restore speech to the bound tongue, and to give sight to the blind, because the power of Beelzebub was working through Him.



This is an instance of the action of prejudice.

I.—THE PERVERTING POWER OF PREJUDICE. Anything seen through the medium of prejudice is distorted. It robs the saintliest of their goodness. It takes up the noblest deeds and finds baseness in them. Beneath its keen, sacrilegious eye all beauty and grace wither away. A man may be an "Israelite indeed in whom is no guile," but prejudice finds hypocrisy in his prayers, hollowness in his sympathy, selfishness in his philanthropy, ambition in his self-sacrifice, and will make his lower nature the supreme force of his character. It takes a cruel delight in the cynical invention of bad motives for the good that men do, and it blots and stains with its bitter imputations what is fairest and purest in human life. David was a truly loyal and faithful servant of Saul's throne ; but the devil of prejudice creeps into the king's morbid, selfish heart, and he sees in David only a scheming usurper, waiting to vault into his place. Prejudice has time after time sent the best and wisest and most peaceful of a nation's sons and daughters to the prison, the scaffold, and the stake, seeing in them only stubborn, stiff-necked traitors to the crown. When you get a prejudice against

a man, he may be your friend, may generously seek to help you, but you will not see his love. Nothing that he does will be right in your eyes. Even Christ was in league with the devil according to the view of prejudice. He cast out devils by a devil: He was a mover of sedition: a blasphemer: His silence was obstinacy: His eating and drinking were gluttony and drunkenness: His cross was the sign that God had forsaken Him.

II.—THE STUBBORNNESS OF PREJUDICE. In clear, unanswerable words Christ shewed the utter absurdity of the sophism they had invented. Nothing could be more foolish, more self-contradictory, more easy of refutation, than the suggestion they had made respecting the power of Christ. And He met it and conclusively replied to it. He had done good, had overthrown evil, could that be a work of the spirit of evil? Could Satan be his own enemy? Was it not rather the coming of the kingdom of God amongst them. Who could overcome the devil but one who was mightier than the devil—even God? "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger," &c. It was an irresistible argument. It brought out into the

clear light of day the unspeakable foolishness of their charge against Him. But though silenced, they were not driven from their opinions. Their prejudice was not swept away. It is a stubborn, irrational thing, with which you cannot argue : a subtle spirit with which you cannot close and wrestle. It does not know when it is beaten. Even Christ cannot subdue and dislodge it. Demonstration, rebuke, forbearance, are all powerless to overcome and banish it.

Prejudice against Christ, and the truth of Christ, involves a man in a terrible doom. It is the most dangerous of all sins, the hardest for the Spirit of God to prevail against. By it a man, more completely than by any other sin, shuts himself up away from the very grace that would save him. He rejects the light and calls it darkness. Christ spoke solemnly of this sin, more solemnly than of any other : He calls it blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and adds, "it shall not be forgiven, neither in this age nor in that which is to come." When it has taken up its abode in a man's heart, it will be long æons ere it will be repented of and pardon can come.

THOMAS HAMMOND.

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# 1 Corinthians xiv. 8.

(*The Fourth Sunday in Lent.*)

As an illustration of the worthlessness of mere sounds, apart from their meaning, the apostle instances those made by musical instruments. He speaks of the flute, the harp, the trumpet. Concerning this last instrument it was most of all important that the meaning of its tones should be understood, and hence that it should give forth its notes accurately and distinctly. For among the uses to which the trumpet was devoted none was more frequent or more notable than that of warning a city, or a camp, or an army of the approach of the foe. A peculiar succession of notes then, as now, raised the alarm of danger, and gave the signal for attack, or defence, or for safe retreat as the case might need. Now just as the trumpet had its special function in pealing forth distinct, definite sounds, so all things in the economy of Nature, of Human Life, and of Christian Life, have their precise and exact function, on the right discharge of which vast results—results often comparable to those of a gigantic war—are depending.

I.—The PRINCIPLE here indicated. (1) *It is not far to seek, in what we may term our a priori argument, concerning a divinely*

*ordered universe.* Since all events are related to each other in the mighty chain of cause and effect, we should expect that the failure of any link would involve disastrous results. There are many voices in Nature—every law is a voice—and none of them is without signification. Uncertainty in the sound of any of them would be scarcely less evil than silence. So, too, with every atom and every event, as well as every law. Neither is the development of the principle far to seek in (2) *The history of human affairs.* On every hand, in our march along the great highways of time, or our research in its quieter by-ways, we confront instances of the momentousness of a right fulfilment by the man, or the institution, or the nation, of the precise mission devolving on such man, or institution, or nation. An uncertain sound at some given epoch and the course of all succeeding history would have been changed.

II.—Some PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS of this Principle. It is true in regard (1) *To the discharge of Christian activities.* There are multiform methods of philanthropic activity; never so many as to-day. Each one of us has his special adaptation for the use of such methods, just as each method has its peculiar adaptation to some need. If those who are qualified

to teach, do not instruct; to console, do not comfort; to contrive, do not organize, who shall? Some tone on the trumpet of truth depends on you. If you refrain, or hesitate, or yield uncertain sounds, who shall prepare for the day of battle? It is true in regard (2) *To Christian giving.* The gold, the silver, the copper has to be given, each metal as it were making its own music. Withhold just what, by claim and capacity, you ought to have given, and there is an uncertain sound, and that uncertain sound means beggary here, discouragement yonder, and hopeless inanition elsewhere. Nay the very spirit of the giving may make all the difference, for is not the sounding brass and tinkling cymbal—which is gift without love—an uncertain sound? It is true in regard manifestly to (3) *Prayers.* Who can tell the mischief of uncertain sounds here in a region where Moses and Elijah were so mighty. It is true of (4) *Every life.* Each life is trumpet-tongued with the message of truth or error, good or ill. Silence is impossible. Uncertainty is failure, for it misleads and bewilders. Minister, Parent, Teacher, if your life give an uncertain sound who shall prepare your people, your family, your class for battle?—the battle for which music prepares, and which will be succeeded by yet

nobler and sweeter music. Well does Bishop Webb, in his exquisite book on "The Presence and Office of The Holy Ghost," put this truth of each individual having his special part to fulfil in the destiny of humanity: "You are yourself; none of you are like your fellows. And you are what you are by God's arrangement,—because you have a certain part to play in God's Providence, in the history of the world, and the development of the Body of Christ. God the Holy Ghost is brooding over you as the great Musician. He can bring out the music that is wanted. He can enable you to furnish some strain that would be lacking in the ears of God if you did not bring it, if you did not strike your string, nor touch your key." EDITOR.

#### Luke iv. 14-30.

(*The Fifth Sunday in Lent.*)

OUR study of this familiar page of The Great Biography leads us at this time to notice—

I.—THE PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF JESUS. In this incident there is much self-revelation of the Lord to our intellect and to our heart. For do we not notice (1) *His love of home.* He comes to Nazareth "where He had been brought up,"—the old cottage, workshop, all were there; with

pathos He, Himself, speaks of His "own country," a description that finds an echo in all who love to return to their boyhood's haunts and their childhood's home. (2) *His religious habits.* (a) He frequents the village synagogue as "His custom was, and (b) He turns to the Scriptures with the familiarity that finds the appropriate passage He would read. Among the "dear old ways" of His past life it is clear that Public Worship, and what we may call Bible Reading had their place. (3) *His knowledge of human nature.* His eye discerned all that was seething in the bosoms of that village audience, and He anticipates their scorn and contempt as "a familiar" of the place. (4) *His deepening higher consciousness.* As He reads there is borne in upon Him the deepening sense of who He was and what He was to do. Something in His look fastened all eyes on Him, while His tone of Divine self-assertion rings down the ages even as it pealed through that village synagogue.

II.—THE PUBLIC MISSION OF JESUS. He was on the threshold of His ministry, inaugurating the career we call "His work." And He takes the Jubilee as foreshadowing human redemption from all misery; in each and every detail of the one lies a hint of the other. All that the year of Jubilee

brought to the Jew materially, Christianity is to bring to man spiritually. And in Him that age was ushered in. His face was set towards the needy, the enslaved, the ignorant, and His hands stretched out for their enrichment, their emancipation, their enlightenment. Not in an Age but in a Person, and that Himself, was the hope of a forlorn and oppressed and bewildered world.

III.—THE HISTORIC PLACE OF JESUS. He Himself claims historic importance. Reading after Him the words He read, we conclude (1) *His incarnate life fulfilled much previous prophecy*. Some of that prophecy may have been conscious, much was apparently unconscious. But it was there. So not only apostles like Paul and Peter and John teach, but so Christ Himself, here and elsewhere, declares,—“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” As Canon Westcott remarks, “There may be uncertainties as to the origin and date of different books; there may be doubts as to the interpretation of different phrases they contain; but the *spirit of prophecy* is something which rises above the region

of such perplexities. . . . All along the witness to a historic, human Saviour is written as the message of God through his Old Covenant.” (2) *His incarnate life predicts and pledges His perpetual work*. His three years’ ministry has at least as much relation to what shall follow as to what preceded. He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” So that it is enough to know that “yesterday” He preached to the poor, “yesterday” released the captive, “yesterday” recovered sight to the blind, to know what He will do to-day.

IV.—THE REJECTION BY MEN OF JESUS. “He came to His own, and His own received Him not.” “Nazareth was like a rose, and like a rose had the same rounded form, enclosed by mountains as the flower by its leaves.” So say the travellers. But do we not find thorns, sharp and deadly thorns there of prejudice, envy, cruelty? Strange then that He who (a) had such a character, (b) and such a mission, and (c) such historic glory should have met with scorn, contempt, and rejection. It is strange still.

EDITOR.



## Pulpit Handmaids.

### The Communism of Christ.

(A Digest of a Chapter from "Gesta Christi.")

IN the consideration of the condition of the very poor of our land, the question of wealth and its distribution will necessarily come to the front. Articles such as "Labourers and Artizans' Dwellings," "Progress and Poverty," "The Mischief of State Aid," and "Esau's Cry," cannot be written, and sermons, alike prudent and sympathetic, cannot be delivered without a careful consideration of the science of economics. Reviewers, statesmen, and preachers will be turning to standard works on political economy for information and for arguments wherewith to strengthen their respective positions. Mr. C. Long Brace, in his "Gesta Christi," or "a history of Human Progress under Christianity," has an able chapter on the Distribution of Property. His work is not that of a mere novice or theorist, but of one "engaged for some thirty years in a practical application of the principles of Christianity, with the view of curing certain great social evils in the city of New York. He has been able to test its powers on a large scale in diminishing poverty, crime, and misery." An outline of his ninth chapter may be useful to the readers of the *Homilist*.

(a) There will be diverse *difficulties* in examining the direction and effect of Christ's teachings on the distribution of property on the one hand, in not defining oriental and half-poetic expressions as we would similar phrases in a western and more prosaic narrative; and on the other in not interpreting Christ's words solely by the practice of His later followers and by the ideas of a modern and industrial age. (b) There must not be the *assumption* that the modern form of the distribution of wealth is the final and perfect one, and that society, as it is now, is substantially what it must be in all coming ages, or what our Lord contemplated in His future "kingdom of Heaven," or regenerated society of all men. The feudal system belonged to a stage of human progress, the modern industrial and commercial

system to another. Neither, however, (*c*) is the *ideal* or perfect system. A society which presents on one side enormous fortunes and endless accumulations of wealth, while on the other it offers classes ground down by poverty and pinched by want, is certainly not the Christian ideal of society. The great moral progress of the future of the race will plainly be toward some form of a more equable distribution of the proceeds of labour.

I.—THE COMMUNISM OF CHRISTIANITY, ITS NATURE—Gathered—

1. *From the teachings of Christ.* These teachings, if read with perfect candour, discover a continual tendency towards (*a*) exalting poverty, (*b*) humbling wealth, and (*c*) equalising the conditions of life. Throughout the Gospels there is a certain tone in favour of greater distribution than would suit modern ideas. Both Christ and His apostles leave the impression everywhere that a greater equalizing of human goods, a moderate acquisition, and a raising up from poverty, is what is demanded. Nothing, however, in Christ's teachings tends towards any forcible interfering with rights of property, or encourages dependence on others. Neither the idleness of socialism or monasticism, nor the weakness of pauperism, finds any support in the Gospels.

2. *From the communism of the apostles* we gather how deeply the instructions of their Divine Master penetrated them; but there is nothing in their words to show that they set forth this as a model for the future. Their great principles were not to hunger for riches, but to be content with moderate means, and if wealth came, to hold it rigidly as a trust for the good of humanity. These principles would certainly tend to the equalisation of property.

II.—THE COMMUNISM OF CHRIST—ITS INSTRUMENTS. The methods by which our Lord would resist accumulation, are by inculcating the absolute duty of giving and of sharing means with others who are less fortunate, and by withdrawing the mind from the excessive greed of money. One great means of equalising human conditions, was benefaction and charity.

1. *Charity* arising from the great underlying principle of His whole teachings, that the individual society were to be renewed by love to God, and to man through Him. And here it is necessary to observe that *the world never more needed charity*

and compassion than it did in the centuries just following Christ. For (a) Rome had *stripped the richest provinces* of the ancient world of every vestige of wealth. (b) Her exorbitant *taxation* soon left nothing to the unfortunate peasants. (c) Her incessant *Wars* added to the misery of the labouring classes. (d) Her wasting *slavery* depressed the industry of the empire, and (e) *Proletaries* gathered in the cities, especially in the capital. Hence poverty, orphanage, abandonment of children, prevailed. What remedial measures were resorted to?

(i) *Pagan charity*. In ancient Rome the duty of giving alms to beggars, and in relieving extreme distress was acknowledged. Still anything like the modern sentiments, born of Christianity, of the obligation of doing all in one's power to relieve misery, and the benefactions, so common in modern days, were things almost unknown in the ancient world. Nor were the efforts of the Government true charity, but depending largely on the favour of the crowd, were often untimely and indiscriminate. In the year of the Republic, 683, thirty-three per cent. of the population were supported at public expense. Among the charities may be named (a) *out-door relief*; under Augustus, 200,000 received it. (b) *Reduction of the price of bread* in the metropolis. (c) *Loans*, or the giving of means to buy a little piece of land, or to found a trade. (d) *Bounties* for large families. (e) *Orphanages* and orphan funds. (f) *Bequests* for benevolent purposes. (g) *Social clubs*. (h) Other *indirect methods*, such as a gratuity, clients supported by their patrons, agrarian laws, &c. Some of these measures of relief were fraught with the most mischievous consequences; encouraging improvidence, discouraging industry. The masses supported a *tyranny and received bread and shows*. The real workers were despoiled. Thus poverty and orphanage in the Roman empire remained almost untouched until remedial measures were introduced.

(ii) *Christian charity*. With Christianity began the organised and individual charity of modern Europe. It is, most distinctly, the fruit of Christ's teaching. And yet the Master did not lay any extraordinary weight on alms-giving. He simply taught the love of man through love to Himself. The equal brotherhood of man came forth from His teachings, and the unfortunate had hence-

forth around them the halo of the Great Sufferer, and a very different place in the sympathies of the new world in Europe.

Very early the Christian churches became centres of charity. (a) *Refuges* for orphans. (b) *Hospitals* for mothers. (c) *Strangers' rests*. (d) *The Offertory*. (e) *Endowments* to churches for the use of the poor. (f) Set seasons for *special offerings*. Thus the month of December, which had been the especial month of the gladiatorial shows, became the time of offerings for the poor and suffering, in memory of Him who had died for all.

*Objection.* It has been alleged that this spirit of Christian charity has (a) *cultivated dependence*. There is nothing in the teaching of the New Testament to support this objection. "If a man will not work neither shall he eat," is evidently a favourite proverb with the great apostle. The type of character Christ stamped upon men was earnest and self-controlled. (b) *Increased pauperism*, or that kind of poverty which is without hope. The excessive and increasing alms-giving in European countries, and the monastic associations of the middle ages are not due to the legitimate and logical influence of Christianity.

2. *Education* as endowed by individuals, or the State, is a better form than charity for the distribution of the profits of labour. In *medieval* times the power of the Church was exerted in founding schools and institutions of learning. In more *modern* times the great movements for popular education are stimulated by the same principles of humanity. The rich are forced to give of their abundance for the education of the poor, and is not this a forcible distribution of wealth, to confer the highest possible blessings on the needy?

Christianity, in presenting the dignity of man, tends to root out the degraded character of pauperism; and by teaching that benevolence must ever regard the highest welfare of the recipients, it prevents indiscriminate alms-giving. Trade, under it, will be governed by honest and unselfish principles. A new principle of the distribution of wealth will prevail. The surplus beyond reasonable wants will be continually distributed in education, &c., and possibly the laws themselves will forbid accumulation beyond a fixed amount; or all such matters will be left to a Christianised public opinion.

BRISTOL CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTE. T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.



## Reviews.

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CHRIST IN MODERN LIFE. By REV. STOPFORD BROOKE. London: Kegan Paul, Paternoster Square.

We cannot better present this volume to our readers than by giving the following quotation from the able author's preface:—"The main thought which underlies this volume is outlined in the first two sermons, and is this: that the ideas which Christ made manifest on earth are capable of endless expansion, to suit the wants of men in every age, and that they do expand, developing into new forms of larger import and wider application in a direct proportion to the progress of mankind, of which they are both root and sap. If we look long and earnestly enough we shall find in them (not read into them as some say) the explanation and solution, not only of our religious, but even of our political and social problems. Nor do they contradict the ideas of direct scientific research, nor those which have been generalised from the results of that research, but are in essential analogy with both one and the other." The volume contains seventeen sermons on such subjects as:—"The Fitness of Christianity for Mankind—The Higher Judaism and Christianity—Judaism and Christianity—The Central Truth of Christianity—The Beauty of Christ's Character—Prayer and Natural Law—The Force of Prayer—Immortality—Melancholia—Art Expenditure—Child Life—Youth and its Questions to-day—Youth and its Hope of Progress—The Presentiments of Truth—The Mid-day of Life—The Afternoon of Life—The Glory and Work of Old Age." All these subjects are treated with the author's characteristic thoughtfulness, breadth, devoutness, and catholicity. There are thousands of church and chapel-goers in London, who are so wearied with the ignorant dogmatism, and dull monotony of pulpits, that their Sabbath-day has lost its interest. To such we recommend, with all honesty and earnestness, a visit to Bloomsbury Chapel. Such a visit we have paid more than once, and we felt that the pulpit is the grandest and mightiest of all morally elevating forces when occupied by such men as Stopford Brooke.

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ENGLISH POETESSES. By ERIC ROBERTSON, M.A. London: Cassell and Co., Ludgate Hill.

The introduction to this book has much interested us. The author's description of poetry, and his remarks on the difference between the mind of the man and that of the woman challenge study. The following



is a list of the English Poetesses here presented to our notice, with a most interesting sketch of their history, and a description of their productions :— “ Katherine Phelps, Aphra Behn, The Duchess of Newcastle, Lady Mary Montague, Mrs. Piozzi, Hannah Cowley, Charlotte Smith, Mrs. Barbauld, Anna Seward, Mrs. Opie, Mary Lamb, Lady Grisell Baillie, Mrs. Cockburn, Jane Elliot, Lady Anne Barnard, Baroness Nairne, Joanna Baillie, Mrs. Hemans, L. E. L., Adelaide Proctor, Caroline Norton, Lady Dufferin, Mrs. Southey, Mary Mitford, Sarah Flower Adams, Sara Coleridge, E. Barrett Browning, Emily Bronte, George Eliot, Menella Bute Smedley, Christina Rossetti, Emily Pfeiffer, Augusta Webster, Alice Meynell, Jean Ingelow, Harriet Hamilton King, Mathilde Blind, Mary Robinson,” &c. This is a volume of interesting reading and quickening thought.

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE MIND UPON THE BODY. By DANIEL HACK TUKE, M.D., F.R.C.P., LL.D. In Two Volumes. Second Edition. London: J. & A. Churchill, New Burlington Street.

Because “the highest study of mankind is man,” a work of this kind, which throws light on human nature in its complicated organisation, sensibilities, faculties, and forces, is of permanent interest and unspeakable value. Of all such works we know of none in all respects comparable in value to that now under our notice. It is the product of an eminent scientist, physician, and scholar, whose reading on the subject has been vast, varied, and extensive. He has made himself acquainted with the most distinguished psychological and physiological authorities on all the thrillingly interesting subjects which he unfolds to our view. This we say, after a somewhat cursory perusal, with a determination to go more studiously through its pages, after which, we have no doubt, our appreciation of its contents will be heightened. Meanwhile, we most heartily recommend the book, not merely to medical practitioners, but to every preacher of the Gospel whose great work it is to reveal the Divine in the human. If the pulpit, instead of employing (as it frequently does) sensational anecdotes, often of mere human manufacture, to illustrate and impress its doctrines, would make use of well-authenticated scientific facts—especially facts connected with human nature—its intellectual and moral power would be increased a hundred-fold. In the preface, the author informs us that his object has been—(1) “To collect together authentic illustrations of the influence of the mind upon the body scattered through various medical and other works, however familiar to

many these cases may be, supplemented by those falling within my own knowledge. (2) To give these cases fresh interest and value by arranging them on a definite physiological basis. (3) To show the power and extent of this influence, not only in health in causing disorders of sensation, motion, and the organic functions, but also its importance as a practical remedy in disease. (4) To ascertain as far as possible the channels through, and the mode by, which this influence is exerted. (5) To elucidate by this enquiry the nature and action of what is usually understood as the imagination."

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*Publications of Rev. Charles Bullock, B.D., Paternoster Buildings.*

"THE CHURCH STANDARD." This is the eighth volume of this series, and is moulded after the character of its predecessors, containing similar subjects marked by equal merit, and instinct with the same spirit of catholicity. It contains several portraits, amongst them one of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, and the present Archbishop, and many other celebrated clergymen. There is also a very striking portrait of the late Robert Moffat, the illustrious missionary. Indeed, this large and handsome volume is crowded with objects of interest, poetry, tales, anecdotes of all descriptions, biographic sketches. It has also much church news, and several striking historic pictures. Indeed, it is an annual of its class which, in various excellences, has but few, if any equals.

HAND AND HEART. This is edited by Mr. Frederick Sherlock, and is, in some respects, similar to the "Church Standard." It has anecdotes, historic sketches, pictorial illustrations, poetries, and portraits. It is edited in the interest of temperance, Christian morality, and religion. We most heartily recommend this Annual to households, for the young everywhere to read.

HOME WORDS. This is another volume of a well-known church magazine, and contains much to interest and instruct.

THE DAY OF DAYS. This is the twelfth volume of this work, and resembles in its literary, artistic, and moral characteristics, all the productions edited by Rev. Charles Bullock, who has for so many years shown his eminent qualifications in the important work he has undertaken.

WHO GAVE US THE BOOK? Here is a short sketch of Tyndale, written by Dr. Bullock himself, in his well-known interesting and instructive style.

PICTORIAL RECORDS OF REMARKABLE EVENTS. London : James Sangster and Co., 31, Paternoster Row.

In this very handsome volume we have numerous sketches and illustrations of some of the most wonderful events that have occurred, and the grandest deeds achieved in the history of our world. The whole is illustrated by no less than 155 wood engravings, and a series of striking portraits of world-renowned heroes, printed in the best style of chromolithography. With this book in a room, no one capable of reading need be dull, or afflicted in any measure with *ennui*. Every page is astir with life, strange and strong. The enterprising publisher deserves the hearty thanks of all Englishmen for providing annually such soul-stirring volumes as these.

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ADVENTURES OF ROBINSON CRUSOE. With Coloured Illustrations. London : Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Row.

The immortal and world-renowned *Robinson Crusoe* never appeared in such attractive and elegant costume as here. Always charming as portrayed by the pen of Defoe, it is rendered even more so appearing on such paper, and in such type, and with such striking coloured illustrations as we have here. Let those who want to present to their young friends the "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," take care to apply to the Publisher of this very beautiful edition.

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BEST OF EVERYTHING. London : Frederick Warne and Co., Bedford Street, Strand.

A work in its *80th thousand* requires neither description or commendation. Its character is well known, and its merits are appreciated. This book teems with brief sections of valuable information upon the best supplies for human needs that are felt by the millions every day in the year. All this information, by a wise classification and intense condensation, is rendered available at any moment.

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THE PULPIT COMMENTARY. Edited by Rev. CANON SPENCE, M.A. The FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS. London : Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1, Paternoster Square.

In this volume of the "Pulpit Commentary" on the First Epistle of Corinthians, the Exposition is given by *Canon Farrar*, and the Homiletic section by *Dr. David Thomas*. These names are sufficient to inform our readers as to the real character of this volume. We understand that Canon Farrar and Dr. Thomas are engaged on the production of the forthcoming volume on the Second Epistle.



*The*  
*Leading Homily.*

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(For Easter Sunday.)

“EGO SUM RESURRECTIO ET VITA.”

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“AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE  
ALIVE.”—1 *Corinthians* xv. 22.

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**T**HE theme of this chapter is the resurrection of the body, and whilst in this verse the common mortality of the race, as derived from Adam, is introduced, it is not that it may be discussed, but as an antithesis to, and as serving to emphasise the subsequent declaration of the universality of the resurrection to be wrought by Christ. *The apostle ascribes the resurrection, that shall be, to Christ*, and so could hardly affirm with more distinctness His omnipotence. A superficial reader of the two collections of writings, termed respectively the Old and New Testaments, would be apt to conclude that they exalt two rival deities—Jehovah and Jesus,—ascribing to each omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and absolute holiness. Many of the Jews, including the writer of this epistle, fell into such error. By a special manifestation of Jesus in the Shekinah, Saul of Tarsus came to know God in Christ and, as Paul the apostle, to preach the Gospel. By a careful study of the Saviour's life, death, resurrection, and statements, and of the views entertained of Him by those who knew Him best, we see that He is not another God, but “God manifest in the flesh,” God in expression,

the Word, the most explicit declaration we have of the fact that "God is Love."

So when *creation*, which before was ascribed to God, is ascribed to Jesus, as in the words of the apostle John, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made"; and by Paul, "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him,"—viewing such ascription in the light of the unity of Father and Son—we see therein but an emphatic mode of affirming that *all things were made by God with loving intent*. So in looking on the works of His hands we are not to see Omnipotence just fringed with love, but Love operating by Omnipotence, dominating all matter and force; we are not to behold an all-powerful arm, superficially draped with affection, but an arm, the controlling muscle, the guiding nerve, the motive impulse of which is love.

When the Christian poet, looking on the results of creation, says, "My Father made them all," we see that he realises a grand privilege of sonship within the reach of us all; but we may realise this to a fuller extent, when, following New Testament warrant, we say, Jesus made them all,—He "who loved me, and gave Himself for me," is the Creator, Sustainer, and Controller of all things. And if, in the evolutions of nature, there is that which appears to us terrible and productive of suffering and pain, we have confidence that the powerful, gentle God-Christ, who suffered here, as we must do, for so high and gracious end, will permit of pain only as a punitive, purifying process and a requisite prelude to purest pleasure.

But here *re-creation* is ascribed to Christ. Already around us are the symbols of the resurrection, tokens of the coming spring,—the lengthening light, the balmy air, the bud and blossom, the smiling of vernal flowers in unexpected places, the scent of violet and primrose, the musical piping of birds, all of which should be associated with the name of Jesus,—"*by Him all things consist.*" He is "the Life," and it is the life that emanated from Him that



is immanent in creation, and whose presence is indicated in rising sap and floating fragrance and all the pulsations and bloomings and warblings of nature.

“But how soon the fairness of the spring, melting into the glory of the summer and fading into the affluence of the autumn, will be succeeded by the drear winter.” True, yet in winter’s darkest hours we have sweetest social intercourse and intellectual joy; and may cheer ourselves, the while, with the thought of a succeeding spring, saying with truth, as we glance on the death that seems to reign in the natural world, “‘In Christ shall all be made alive,’—the loving might of Jehovah-Jesus shall renew the face of the earth.”

*But the re-creation of the human frame* is here spoken of. Its creation is marvellous enough. The parent, if he have any reflective capacity at all, looking on his children must be filled with amazement at the skill and grace of the great Artist-architect, who is much more truly their father than himself. Aye, and when he notes the developing intelligence, the marked individuality of each character, his adoring wonder is augmented. God renews the face of the earth in a richer way than the scattering of vernal glories, even by sending into it the children that dispel more care than they bring, and make the old world young with rippling laughter and calm-eyed innocence. The Christ who took the infants in His arms and blessed them, makes the earth alive with their gleesome presence.

“But the spring of youth is soon followed by the winter of sickness, age, and death.” True again, yet spiritual blessings are associated therewith; as, and often because, the outer man perishes the inward man is renewed, and the assurance remains that “As in Adam all die,” aye, and as in Christ all were called into being, “even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” And surely re-creation is quite as possible as creation, and only seems to us more wonderful because as yet it has not been comprised within the narrow limits of our experience.

*The apostle predicates the resurrection of all men.* The “all” of the second clause is surely as comprehensive as the “all” of the first, whilst that in the first must apply to the whole race.

This but accords with the apostle's declaration elsewhere, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust"; and with Christ's own words, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation." "In Christ shall *all* be made alive."

Of the body which the faithful shall possess, much is said. "Sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power; sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body." The flesh shall no longer lust against the spirit, but be its pure vehicle, its obedient instrument and ever willing servant. It shall be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body," the body of His transfiguration and ascension.

Under these circumstances we may be sure that body and soul will harmonize. This is not always the case now and here. If a congregation were to change raiment, ere leaving the sanctuary, the effect would hardly be more incongruous than that we often see in the apparently ill-fitting, strangely allotted garments of the flesh wherewith many human souls are clothed. Masculine souls in feminine bodies, feminine souls in masculine bodies, strong wills in weak frames, and weak wills in strong frames. No doubt such alliance (or misalliance) has its uses in this preparatory and disciplinary life, but yonder the adaptation of the outward to the inward shall be complete, the beautiful strong soul shall not, as is now so frequently the case, inhabit the deformed and feeble body.

But what of the bodies of the unjust? Not a word, save that it is Christ who shall re-create them,—the Son of Man, at whose voice they shall come forth. "They shall look on Him whom they have pierced," by neglect and sin, and hear Him say, "depart."

"But surely," some will say, "the loving Jesus will not raise men to consign them to an endless suffering. Why could He not let them sleep the sleep of extinction?" It is clear from revelation that He will raise the unjust, and to suffering. As men

wake from sleep to suffer here, so will they wake from death to suffer hereafter. But as it is with loving purpose God permits suffering here, so it will be, we cannot doubt, with loving purpose that He will raise the unjust to suffering hereafter; with loving purpose, if not to them, to others whom He would teach thereby; but we have no warrant for saying that it will not be with loving purpose towards them. "How can that be if they are raised to everlasting suffering?" That there is to be everlasting punishment for the wicked Scripture seems to affirm; but it does not affirm that the wicked are to be everlastingly so. That suffering must be as lasting as sin none can doubt, for is it not its necessary sequence and accompaniment, its shadow, from which it cannot shake itself free? So the deeper question arises, "Is sin to be everlasting?" It is not *from* everlasting, is it to be *to* everlasting? Is the revolt against the Divine will to be for evermore unsubdued by the tender firmness of Divine discipline and the meltings of Divine grace? If so, how can this be harmonized with the assertion that Christ the Good Shepherd, who came to seek the lost sheep "until He find it," shall "see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied": or with the assertion made in this same chapter, "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death": and again, "All things shall be subdued unto Him"? As long as sin lasts suffering must last. That they will last into the intermediate state, that they will last to and beyond the resurrection is clear, but must not both cease at some time if Christ is to be a complete victor in the moral and spiritual sense ascribed in Scripture to His conquest?

When it is said that "In Adam all die," if reference is made not only to physical mortality but to an inherited bias leading to moral and spiritual death, then life in Christ, which is predicated of all, must refer, in its final operation, to soul as well as body.

But whilst Scripture gives glimpses into the future, it dwells chiefly on the present. God's present relation to us, our present duty towards and privileges in Him, our present opportunities of faith, holiness, usefulness, and consequent joy. In the remembrance of this we are compelled to ask if this generation is not

projecting its thought too persistently into the future? Is not eschatology occupying too much of men's time and consideration? "*Now* is the accepted time, *now* is the day of salvation." Jesus was so called because He should save His people *from their sins*. There is a resurrection to be obtained *now*. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Even now in Christ may all be made alive; alive to their spiritual necessities and to God's ability and readiness to meet them; alive to the claims and love of the Father in heaven and the brethren on the earth; alive to the joys of knowledge, of trust, of affection, and of service.

If the blessings of Christianity belonged to this life alone, and death ended all, still would it be of priceless value. But does not the apostle contradict this, when in this same chapter he says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable"? What he means by these words is not that he, leading the Christly life, would, if there were no hereafter, be more wretched than the selfish and sensual, but that "if in this life only we" (the other apostles and himself) "have hoped" (R.V.), or "had hope" (Alford), "in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable"; because (verses 14, 15) "if Christ be not risen, we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He raised not up." If Christ were not risen, they who said they had seen Him were liars and morally miserable. Paul, made alive in Christ, with all his trials and perils and privations, was far happier than a Festus, an Agrippa, a Felix, or a Nero, for whilst they were wretched in a palace, he could sing in a prison.

There is none who seeking *now* for quickening grace will not be made alive in Christ, and possess a growing peace, purity, and power that shall ripen into everlasting holiness and joyful strength.

WORCESTER.

SEPTIMUS MARCH, B.A.

## Germ of Thought.

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### A Meditation for Good Friday.

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"THE DEATH OF THE CROSS."—*Phil.* ii. 8.

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DEATH is one of the most familiar and frequent events in this world. The death of any human being, if steadily contemplated, touches the deepest springs of our nature, and starts far-reaching trains of thought. What does death take *from* us? What does it introduce us *to*? What *influences* does it exert upon those who survive? We call now to remembrance "the *death* of Christ." To-day many millions of Christian souls are mentally wending their way to "the place called Calvary," and taking their station before "the cross of the Crucified." It is true that the current of life, every day, is influenced by that death upon Calvary's cross. All existences, and all worlds are touched by it. It forms one of the crises of history. But led by the services of the past week, with fixed determination that death forms the special theme of thought, and prayer, and discourse of untold numbers who love the Lord "dearer than life."

From whatever point we view the death of Christ, it is wonderful. Think upon (a) *Its subject*—"Christ Jesus." Outwardly, only a poor peasant teacher, &c. As to *character*, pure, &c. As to *conduct*, meek and resigned. "Very man," and yet "very God." (b) *Its mode*. Various the modes of death's advent. Here how *painful* and *ignominious*—"a cross." (c) *Its surroundings, spectators, and influences*. (Describe briefly) c.f. Robertson's "Human Race," p. 152. Consider, then, this "death of the cross" as—

I.—THE FULFILMENT OF AN ETERNAL PURPOSE. Purpose is marked upon all the works of nature. Certain theorists may deny this (*e.g.* Hæckel denies that there "is purpose in nature"). The fact is apparent to all simple-minded observers. Does not



the eye reveal a purpose? Nothing "walks with aimless feet" (c.f. "Walks in the Regions of Science and Faith," by the Bishop of Carlisle). The redemptive death of Christ is no exception to the ordinary way of God's working. It is an essential part of the original plan of the whole creation of God. It is not an "expedient," not an "after-thought." It meets an evil eternally *foreseen*, by a remedy eternally *fore-ordained* (1 S. Peter i. 18-20). Mark (a) *its great antiquity*. No definite period can be assigned as the age of this world. Science takes us back far into the abyss of ages. *Before* the remotest period we can reach, or even guess, was "this purpose" established. Before those stars which have shone for cycles of ages, defying our power to number or measure. Before the first germ of life. Before this planet had received its moulding influences as the abode of man. Before man walked this world, or even Eden bloomed, or sin found its entrance, or Christ assumed our nature, was this purpose in the mind and plans of the Eternal. All time, and all eternity are filled by it, and all histories are transfused with it. (C.f. 1 S. Peter i. 18-20.) "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Mark (b) *its gradual and various unfolding*. No "leaps and bounds" in creation. Stately and gradual growth. "Evolution" of ages necessary to prepare for the tiniest creature its full surroundings. All creation marked with "variety." So here in redemption, how gradually "the purpose" is seen. Like the growth of full daylight from the dawn, &c. How variously unfolded. Type: shadow, ceremonies, and prophecies, &c.

II.—THE ILLUSTRATION OF AN UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE. Our Lord's death was not an ordinary one. It was either more or less than a martyr's death. It was the voluntary sacrifice of a most *precious* and *perfect* life. View it as we may, we cannot escape the conclusion that it was "vicarious." Many are the objections which may be raised against this view, but do not the same objections lie against many of the facts of our daily social life? Is the "vicarious" aspect of Christ's death at variance with the strict justice of God? Is it difficult to believe that the Innocent suffered for the guilty? Consider the many facts and illustrations around us that show "that men suffer the natural

punishment for things of which they are not guilty." (C.f. "The Power of Atonement," by Archbishop of York.) Certainly, science shows this principle in every realm of the universe of being. *Physical, intellectual, and moral* beings are controlled by this law. "Perfect through suffering." "Death is the source of life." (Robertson, vol. 3, "The Sacrifice of Christ.")

III.—A MANIFESTATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER. "Christ crucified, the *power and wisdom* of God." But fix your thoughts upon the proof we have of (1) *the infinite love of God*. It is true that love is God's nature. Creation is a proof of God's love.

"Love is the root of creation. 'God's essence.'  
Worlds without number lie in his bosom like children."

*Longfellow's "Children of the Lord's Supper."*

God's love was not created for us by the fact that Christ died for us. It was the cause of Christ dying for us. "God so loved," &c. (1 S. John iv. 10; Romans viii. 10.) What a proof of love: what a sacrifice thus made: what obstacles conquered. (2) *The infinite sensitiveness of God*. The Eternal can be touched with the sorrows of frail, sinful man. He is pitiful and gentle. Christ's death expresses and accentuates this fact. Bushnell nobly says: "Here is a vehicle that will sufficiently bring home to our guilty feeling, God's wounded feeling, and put us in real acquaintance with that suffering state of love which His unseen goodness feels."

IV.—A TESTIMONY TO THE GREATNESS AND VALUE OF MAN. For whom did Christ die? *Man*: a creature uniting such strange and contradictory powers. Mean and sinful, gross and narrow-visioned. Immortal, and made "in the image of God." Infinite love travailed to bring forth the degraded to the light, and peace and purity so wilfully lost. The attributes of God are seen in all His works, but in "the *man*, Christ Jesus," is God *Himself*. In the nature of our manhood Christ died. What a vindication of our greatness and value. Christ is our Brother, one with us: God is our Father. In nature and destiny we are sublime. We are so precious to God that His only begotten Son chose to die for us, that we may have "our primitive endowments" restored.

What can transcend this proof of our greatness? The Deity *our* Saviour: the awful power before which worlds tremble, &c. The Creator *our* Redeemer. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom," &c. Christ's death *our pattern* and *pledge* of perfection: the *moral force*, too, towards holiness and peace.

Listen, then, to "the eloquence of the cross." Be conformed to the Lord's death. All that is largest, deepest, and noblest in our nature is here held by a bond of constraint. Great the mystery of such a stupendous work and mercy of God. Greater mystery, indeed, if that might and mercy should be resisted, and despised, and disbelieved by His children, with whom He ever pleads.

ANTHORPE RECTORY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

JAMES FOSTER, B.A.

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### Conflict and Conquest.

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"FOR WHATSOEVER IS BEGOTTEN OF GOD OVERCOMETH THE WORLD: AND THIS IS THE VICTORY THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, EVEN OUR FAITH. AND WHO IS HE THAT OVERCOMETH THE WORLD, BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD."  
—1 *John* v. 4, 5. (R.V.)

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It may seem strange, at first thought, that it should be St. John, the apostle of love, who, of all others, in his writings, should use most the figures and language of warfare to describe the Christian life. And yet it is not strange; for the language is the language of Christ Himself, in that last and solemn discourse to His disciples before He suffered. St. John had learnt now by experience, by trial and suffering, and by the comfort of the Holy Ghost, the meaning of those mysterious words of his Lord and Master, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And now he is continually telling of the warfare to be accomplished, the victory to be won. It is to St. Paul, the apostle of faith; to St. Paul, the courageous, the determined, the intrepid, we are indebted for that full and beautiful definition and description of that most

excellent gift of charity. St. Paul extols love; St. John exalts faith. Each shows his humility, and a spirit un-biased, for neither magnifies his own peculiar gift above the other. St. Paul's life, after he embraced Christianity, from his miraculous enlightenment to his tragical death, was continual conflict and peril. But the grief and the "peril among false brethren" was more painful than the cruelty of Nero. In the providence of God, St. John, though banished to Patmos, was permitted to return and die in peace, escaping the hands of the pitiless and fanatical Domitian. In the arms of love died the apostle of love, among his faithful followers—his "little children." He had "overcome the world." The prophets of old foretold the advent of Christ, and proclaimed Him "the Prince of Peace." But He said of Himself: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Strange words, and yet not strange; for those who know Christ best, realise most the deep and terrible truth of the mysterious parable. Sin and Satan,—the "strong man armed,"—has possession of "the house"—the heart of man—and there can be no peace till he is cast out, and Christ, the rightful owner, is in full occupancy. Alas! "the carnal mind"—the mind of the flesh—"is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can it be." Hence, then, if Christ must hold His rightful place in the heart, conflict with Satan and the world of sin is inevitable. And here let us notice—

I.—THE WARFARE. "Whatsoever is begotten of God, overcometh the world." But the warfare must be first waged. There is "the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," in continual antagonism. The desire to do right, prompted by Christ, is met and opposed by the temptation to do wrong, prompted by the sinful allurements of the world. But "the world" must be "overcome," or "the world" will "overcome" us.

"'Tis vice, alas! disposes and prepares  
The mind, that slumbers sweetly in her snares,  
To stoop to tyranny's usurped command,  
And bend her conquered neck beneath his hand."



Man is great indeed; endowed with noble powers; but still dependent on his great Creator. He walks in lofty pride, or lounges on in lewd indifference, and willingly forgets his God. The Christian's warfare, then, is a warfare—

1. *With "the world" of unbelief.* "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God." This is the new birth of faith; as said St. Paul: "By grace are ye saved through faith." Unbelief is a sin of mighty magnitude. It hardens the heart now, as it hardened Pharaoh's of old. It locks up the affections in the chilling regions of gloomy agnosticism, as an ice-bound ship in the Arctic seas. It blinds the eyes to the truest beauties of earth, and the glories of heaven. It deafens the ears to the music of the gospel of peace, and to the loving sounds of the Shepherd's winning voice. We have need, then, like St. Paul, to "fight the good fight of faith;" we have need, like St. James, to "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Not only must we war against the world of unbelief, but also—

2. *With "the world" of undutifulness.* "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." It is God's to command, it is ours to obey. Is it hard to obey? Are His commandments grievous? If so, the fire of love burns low. The warmth, the glow, is lacking. There is no burning zeal, there is no soaring faith. It is love that lightens labour, and inspires to cheerful duty. Watch the weak places, it is there the enemy will attack us. God's commandments are before us, let us do our duty. Wherever the allurements presents itself that would ensnare us, and steal away our love and service from God, let us not hesitate for a moment, but instantly exclaim, "Get thee behind me, Satan." How many Christians are wanting, lacking in this one thing! The way they know, the duty they know, but they fail in obedience. It is against unfaithfulness, undutifulness, that we are called, as Christians, to war an unyielding warfare. If this be the warfare, what are—

II.—THE WEAPONS? St. Paul says: "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." And St. John says: "This is the victory



that overcometh the world, even our faith." It is faith that magnifies all other virtues of the soul, quickens the faltering footsteps, and cheers the drooping heart.

"However deep be the mysterious word,  
 However dark, she disbelieves it not :  
 Where reason would examine, faith obeys,  
 And, 'It is written,' answers every doubt."

Here, then, are the Christian's weapons—

1. "*Faith*" and "*the sword of the Spirit*." This is the weapon wielded by Jesus Himself in His human nature, in those terrible days of temptation in the wilderness. With the "sword of the Spirit," the "Word of God," He frustrated all the assaults of His adversary. This, too, is the Christian's weapon, which he must fearlessly wield in every attack, whether it be from the world, the flesh, or the devil. To the soldier of Christ, this "sword" is a precious one. The "word" is the shining blade, and "faith" is the jewelled hilt whereby he wields it dexterously. That "word" is "the truth as it is in Jesus;" and on this rests the Christian's faith, as the hilt upon the sword. How precious and how mighty is that "truth." Another of the Christian's weapons is—

2. *Faith and "fervent prayer."* Prayer is the trusty weapon of every faithful soul. It brings hope in despair, light in darkness, joy in sorrow, peace in tumult, strength in weakness; its power is omnipotent. Patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs rejoiced in its all-availing might. Who ever faithfully used this weapon in vain? By faith and fervent prayer what battles have been fought! What victories won! They have "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness made strength, waxed valiant in war, turned to flight armies of aliens." It is true the warfare may be arduous, but the weapons are keen and powerful. May not our last thoughts, then, be of—

III.—THE WARRIORS. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." "Whosoever

believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God." The character of the warriors is here clearly set forth. They are "begotten of God," and they are believers "that Jesus is the Christ," the "Son of God." They are His followers, His soldiers. They are separated from the "world," they have joined that innumerable army, "the blessed company of all faithful people," and enlisted under the banner of Christ. Mark, then, their special characteristics here set forth. Being born of God, they are—

1. *Regenerate.* Sin is a disease which has corrupted the whole man, and infected the very inmost life of the soul. Hence we hear the Saviour saying to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again." Regeneration, then, is an infusion of new life into the soul by the Holy Ghost. The old affections and lusts are eradicated, new desires are implanted, a "new heart" is given, and the regenerate man is become a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. Sceptics may scoff, but the "child of God," the Christian warrior, knows this to be a blessed, a glorious fact. Another characteristic is, that as believers in Jesus, they are—

2. *Faithful.* Each one, as a soldier of Christ, knows his duty, and it is his delight to obey. In the heat of the battle, in the thick of the fray, he is there, fighting against sin within and without. His lot may be cast amongst the lower ranks in poverty and toil, or his position may be in a higher grade, yet still his Captain's word is the law of his life. His password is, "Faithful unto death." And what then? What then! Why through all he is—

3. *Victorious.* He has "overcome" the world. The glorious promise is: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." By the grace of God he is enabled to be faithful unto the end, and the end is eternal life. The path has led "through much tribulation," but the end is "joy unspeakable, full of glory." Then away with doubts and fears! He who is for us is more than all who can be against us.

DERRYBRUSK RECTORY,  
ENNISKILLEN.

JOHN W. KAYE, M.A.

## Scenes at Philippi.

“AT MIDNIGHT,” &c.—*Acts xvi. 25–40.*

PHILIPPI in Europe. The spot where Cæsar fought his great battle with Brutus and Cassius nearly a hundred years before. Look at preceding verses for occasion of their trouble and arrest.

I.—THE PREACHERS. “Paul and Silas.” Two honoured servants of God on their first missionary tour in Europe.

(1) *Their situation*,—(a) “in the inner prison.” (b) “Their feet fast in the stocks.” Prison windowless and damp; stocks irritating and painful.

(2) *Their devotion*,—“prayed.” Only a triumphant faith could have prayed in such a place.

(3) *Their gratitude*,—“sang.” Not the requiem of departed hope, or the dirge of despair, but “praises unto God.”

(4) *Their noise*,—“the prisoners heard them.” Noise was no new thing to the prisoners. Groans, curses, threats, had often echoed through those gloomy corridors, but never until now did they echo the voice of *prayer and praise*. I wonder if any of those poor prisoners were converted who “heard” and saw the wonders of that night. Not at all improbable.

(5) *Their deliverance*. (a) Supernatural,—“a great earthquake.” (b) Instantaneous,—“immediately all the doors were opened.” (c) Complete,—“every man’s bands were loosed.” Suddenly, interrupting both worshippers and listeners, a great rumbling commotion is heard, the old prison sways to and fro, every door flies open, and every chain falls off.

II.—THE PENITENT.

(1) *His calling*,—“keeper of the prison.” The exciting scenes of the afternoon and evening had passed, and “at midnight” the jailor was lost in profound slumber.

(2) *His surprise*,—“waking out of his sleep.” Astonished alike at the swaying of the prison and the open doors.

(3) *His dread*,—“that the prisoners had fled.” With all obstacles removed, nothing was more reasonable than to think

so. Prisoners generally have not much conscience when the alternative of freedom or bondage is before them.

(4) *His desperation*,—"would have killed himself." Believing his life to be forfeited, the first thought of the jailor is that of suicide. That was the highest point to which heathen culture could soar. The advice of Seneca was: "If life is pleasant, live; if not, you have right to return whence you came."

(5) *His instructions*,—"do thyself no harm." How did Paul know he was going to?

(6) *His assurance*,—"we are all here." Paul was in a cell under a cell, which had no light but through the ceiling, which was the floor of the upper cell. How then could he vouch for all the prisoners? By supernatural illumination, no doubt.

(7) *His penitence*,—"came trembling." The earthquake, and the strange and sublime conduct of the prisoners, had aroused his guilty conscience.

(8) *His humility*,—"fell down before Paul." There are earthquake crises in life when God's despised and persecuted children shall be revered and respected; crises when they alone can soothe the troubled spirit, and answer the momentous questions which frenzy the human heart.

(9) *His inquiry*,—"what must I do to be saved?" The danger implied here is not man-ward; the presence of all the prisoners saved him from that. The inquiry involves (a) Conviction of guilt and danger, implied in the word "saved." (b) Conviction of the importance of effort or action, implied in the word "do." (c) Deep solicitude to know and do what may be required, implied in the words "what must I do?" (d) Convictions of personal responsibility and danger, implied in the words "what must I?" We live too much in the multitude, we lose ourselves in the mass, we weigh ourselves too often by putting somebody else in the opposite scale. True penitence individualizes a man, and for a time, at least, makes his own personal guilt and danger the ruling factors in his consciousness.

### III.—THE PARDON.

(1) *Its condition*,—"believe."

(2) *Its object*,—"Jesus Christ."

(3) *Its assurance*,—"thou shalt be saved." A true penitent always finds God *real, true, present*.

(4) *Its characteristics*. (a) Sympathetic,—*"washed their stripes."* A man should doubt his conversion if he is not prompted to heal wounds that he has had a hand in making. (b) Hospitable,—*"into his house."* (c) Benevolent,—*"set meat before them."* (d) Public and prompt,—*"baptized straightway."* (e) Contagious,—*"he, and all his."* One pardoned man, under God, has a tendency to produce another. The jailor, though a heathen, had some manhood and character about him, or his family would not have been so ready to follow him with such confidence. Why have we now for the first time, as the apostles preach the Gospel in Europe, the account of whole families being brought to God? Because family religion is a characteristic of European Christianity, as compared with Asiatic Christianity. Christianity in Europe, and I am pleased to add, America, is more than imposing ceremony in temple or cathedral,—it leavens the family. A man first asked for the Gospel in Europe, but a woman (Lydia) first felt its power to save, and all her household were converted and baptized.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

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### Primitive Preaching.

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"AND SOME OF THEM WERE MEN OF CYRENE AND CYPRUS, WHICH WHEN THEY WERE COME TO ANTIOCH, SPAKE UNTO THE GRECIANS, PREACHING THE LORD JESUS. AND THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS WITH THEM: AND A GREAT NUMBER BELIEVED AND TURNED UNTO THE LORD."—*Acts xi. 20, 21.*

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PERSECUTION has generally advanced the cause it attempted to destroy. Especially has it been so in relation to the Gospel; thus the wrath of man has been made to praise God, and overruled to accomplish His purposes in the world. The martyrdom of Stephen was a heavy blow to the early church, and *seemed* likely to impede the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom; but



believers, scattered abroad by the persecution that arose, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. So these things fell out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel. Tidings of these things reached the ears of the Church at Jerusalem, and encouraged them in their witness-bearing for the truth as it is in Jesus. Some of the believers thus scattered, were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. They realised the fact that the Gospel was not for Jews only, but for all the world; seals were set to their ministry, and souls given them for their hire; for "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." We have here *a vivid picture of primitive preaching*; these men were not apostles, but earnest disciples who believed, and, therefore, spoke out of their full hearts of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Their ministry received Divine recognition in the signs that followed. In the preaching of these primitive men we see—

I.—THE GLORIOUS THEME OF THE GOSPEL—"preaching the Lord Jesus." These men did not go forth telling the Grecians of *inventions, or dreams, theories, speculations, or ideas*; but of *facts* connected with the *life, and death, and resurrection* of the Son of God. They preached a *personal, loving, living* Saviour, who had died, but was now alive for evermore. They lived so close to His times, that they could point to His foot-prints, and hear the echoes of His voice. The Lord Jesus, whom they preached, was not a *phantom, or myth, or conception* of the imagination, but a *historic person, a reality* among men. What a glorious theme to expatiate upon. They could speak of Him (a) *as predicted in prophecy*. In the three-fold Hebrew Bible, promises of His advent could be traced, from the first promise in the garden of Eden, down to the utterances of Malachi, with which the Old Testament canon closes. They could show how all the types and shadows of the Law, all the glowing utterances of bards and seers had been fulfilled in Him, thus proving Him to be the one who was to come as the Redeemer of men. (b) *As rejected by the world*. And all, in spite of *matchless words*

that He spoke, *miraculous works* that He performed. Rejected by the world He came to save, by men among whom He went about doing good. The early preachers of the Gospel were never ashamed to own that their Master had been "despised and rejected of men," that He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Had they invented the Gospel they preached, they certainly would not have represented their hero as a victim dying on a cross; they would not have so formed the plot of their romance that the main features of it would be a stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks. They were *honest, sincere, sane, and sober men*, and kept to the *facts* of the history of the Lord Jesus, showing that through the death upon the cross, there had been brought to light immortality and life. (c) *As accepted of Heaven.* They knew that the opening Heaven had declared Jesus to be God's beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. That on the cross Christ exclaimed, "It is finished," and committed His spirit into the hands of His Father. They knew that on morning of third day, Jesus rose triumphant from the grave; that after forty days He ascended from Olivet into glory. They could proclaim, "Christ hath died, yea, rather, He is risen, and hath received gifts for men." They did not preach a defeated Messiah, but a conquering King. No wonder they were so bold; they needed no apology; He, whom they preached, was with them, *in them*, the hope of glory, the inspiration of their lives. In the preaching of the Lord Jesus was proclaimed all that was needed to meet the moral needs of man as a *sinful, suffering, dying* creature. All fullness dwelt in Christ to supply blessedness to man through time and eternity. This was the grandest theme the world had ever heard; there is no theme to-day to *eclipse or equal* it; "preaching the Lord Jesus."

II.—THE DIVINE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. "And the hand of the Lord was with them." The early preachers of the cross were men of like passions to ourselves. The heavenly treasure was put into earthen vessels. The Divine power was seen in that (a) *Human agency was employed.* The early preachers—like their successors—not men exempt from human frailties; they, altogether unequal to their work, and, unaided from above,

would have signally failed, but "the hand of the Lord was with them." The secret power that accompanies the preaching of the word more than made up for deficiencies in the agents who proclaimed it. The Divine power was also seen in that (*b*) *preaching was the ordinance employed*. Not the *sceptre, sword, or crown*, as sign or means of conquest, but "*the tongue of fire*." By the simplicity of preaching, by the message flowing warmly from human lips, touched with a live coal from off the heavenly altar. By means of invisible, penetrating speech, in the wings of earnest words, the spirit would fly with demonstration and power. The message might appear simple, and even feeble; it might awaken antagonism,—sometimes supreme contempt,—but the hand of the Lord was with the preaching of the Lord Jesus; the spiritual force behind the means used gave them velocity and power. The power of the Gospel is the same to-day. Not in *culture, members, wealth*, or any outward thing, does the efficiency of the Gospel reside, but in the presence of the hand of the Lord. In the hand of Samson a contemptible weapon wrought wonders. The stone from the sling of the youthful David laid the giant low, because the hand of the Lord was with them. *Apostles, martyrs, revivalists, reformers, missionaries and ministers*, have done exploits in the preaching of the glad tidings of salvation, but it has ever been because the arm of the Lord has been made bare. It is not the sword that achieves victory so much as the hand that wields it. Well may we take up the prayer of the Prophet—"Awake, awake, O Arm of the Lord, awake," &c. In all our Churches, with all the efforts we put forth to win the world for Christ, we need to realize that the hand of the Lord is with us, for "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

III.—THE SUBLIME SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL. "And a great number believed." The message delivered wrought conviction which issued in genuine conversion. The Gospel (*a*) *changed the hearts of men*. Not only were the minds of the hearers convinced of the truth of what they heard, satisfied with the evidences of Christianity, but the truth sunk deeply into their hearts, and led them to become disciples of the Saviour. They

renounced Judaism, and idolatry of every form, and owned Christ as their only Prophet, Priest, and King. The Gospel (*b*) *transformed the lives of men*; “turned unto the Lord.” They gave up their old prejudices and habits—turned away from sin and worldliness, became new creatures, “living epistles known and read of all men.” The change was *radical and obvious*;—Romans, Greeks, Jews, abandoned their pride, became as little children in the school of Christ. The faith the Gospel inspired was not a mere creed, cold and inoperative, but a *Divine life* that proved itself by appropriate works; for these early believers “*turned unto the Lord*,” sought what He would have them to do, laid themselves out for His service and glory. For them, henceforth, to live was Christ, and to die was gain. Christ proved the Divinity of His mission by His works; and Christianity has proved its heavenly origin by its fruits. It has changed the hearts of men, transformed their lives, quickened “men who have been dead in trespasses and sins.” In turning to the Lord we turn to *Hope, Holiness, Heaven*.

CONCLUSION.—(1) *This glorious Gospel will never be exhausted.* Eighteen hundred years have not disclosed all its splendour. The glowing tongue of the preacher, the ready pen of the writer, still find new beauty to charm, new utterances to deliver. In this age of abounding literature, of intellectual advancement, no life is so fresh or fertile as “*the life of Christ*;” no theme so inexhaustible as “the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God.” (2) *It will never be superseded.* Efforts have been made—desperate and determined—to overthrow the Gospel; attempts have been made—conceited and crafty—to invent some other Gospel for humanity; *but all have signally and completely failed!* The Gospel is the crown and climax to all God’s revelations to the children of men, it serves every age; and, yet, like the pillar of cloud in the wilderness, it is in advance of the march of men. Its glory shall never be eclipsed, its blessings never exhausted. The Lord Jesus is still “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” May we become increasingly like Him, till we shall be eternally with Him, and sing the new song of Moses and the Lamb.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.



### Work called for.

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"SON, GO WORK TO-DAY IN MY VINEYARD."—*Matthew* xxi. 28.

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I.—THE PERSON TO WHOM THE COMMAND IS GIVEN. "Son."

(1) Coming from the lips of a father the command is *authoritative*. No one has a better right to give an order, and expect prompt and cheerful obedience, than he to whom the members of the household are indebted for everything. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). The command, then, of our Father, bears the stamp of *rightful authority*.

(2) Coming from the lips of a father the command will be a *loving* one. It is not an order issued to slaves or hirelings, but to a child rejoicing in the affection of his parent. The very word "Son" displays a bond of tender sympathy.

II.—THE PURPORT OF THE COMMAND. "Go, work." Inactivity is not permissible in the service of God. Angels are incessant in their ministry. The redeemed who are before the throne of God "serve Him day and night in His temple." On earth only is sluggishness in God's work to be found.

(1) It should not be so when it is remembered how *honourable* the work is. Frequently brave men will face danger—death itself—for the honour of serving an earthly monarch. The Christian should esteem it incomparably more reputable to serve the King of kings.

(2) It should not be so when it is remembered how *pleasant* the work is. A service may be honourable, yet attended with privation and peril. Not only is God's work creditable, but wisdom's "ways are ways of pleasantness."

(3) It should not be so when it is remembered how *profitable* the work is. Men everywhere are affected by considerations of profit. Some seek it in the accumulation of material wealth; but "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Others seek it in obeying God's command, and find that "Godliness is profitable unto all things,



having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

III.—THE PLACE FOR CARRYING OUT THE COMMAND. "My vineyard." In every direction vineyard work may be found. Look at self. It requires culture. Those bound to us by ties of nature call for our attention. The Church constantly cries for the thrusting forth of more labourers into the harvest-field. The Sunday school, the ignorant and the careless who surround us, in city and in village alike, present an almost boundless sphere of labour. In short, there is no place where Christian effort can be put forth to which we are not directed by these words.

IV.—THE PERIOD FOR OBEYING THE COMMAND. "To-day." This is always the time God fixes for our service. The present is ours, the future is not. Life is ever uncertain. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." Since such is the case, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Present obedience is what God claims; for all too soon "the night cometh when no man can work."

MILLWALL.

THOMAS J. DIXON.

#### CHRIST, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

"The clear white sunbeam contains in it all the innumerable tints of earth and sky brought together into one sovereign harmony. Nothing is more truly one than light, yet nothing is more manifold. And surely in this fact we can see, faintly portrayed, something of the nature of that light which Christ is, and which Christ gives. It includes the sum of every power of man, by which the Being and Will of God can be known. It is reflected in every object in which we can catch now this, now that fragment of the Divine brightness. The unity of our faith, the unity of the Church, is like the unity of Christ, the unity of light. Take from it any constituent and the whole will be less pure, less really one than it was before. And if it often happens that we can see nothing but the isolated, coloured, broken gleams, let us remember that this is the very condition of our earthly life. For us the glory of heaven is tempered in a thousand lines, but we know even now that these thousand lines spring from and issue in the light which God is, and in which He dwelleth."—CANON WESTCOTT, ON *"The Revelation of The Father."*

## *Homiletical Commentary.*

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### NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

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#### The Tongue of Man.

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Chapter iii. 7-12.—“FOR EVERY KIND OF BEASTS, AND OF BIRDS, AND OF SERPENTS, AND OF THINGS IN THE SEA, IS TAMED, AND HATH BEEN TAMED OF MANKIND: BUT THE TONGUE CAN NO MAN TAME; IT IS AN UNRULY EVIL, FULL OF DEADLY POISON. THEREWITH BLESS WE GOD, EVEN THE FATHER; AND THEREWITH CURSE WE MEN, WHICH ARE MADE AFTER THE SIMILITUDE OF GOD. OUT OF THE SAME MOUTH PROCEEDETH BLESSING AND CURSING. MY BRETHREN, THESE THINGS OUGHT NOT SO TO BE. DOTH A FOUNTAIN SEND FORTH AT THE SAME PLACE SWEET WATER AND BITTER? CAN THE FIG TREE, MY BRETHREN, BEAR OLIVE BERRIES? EITHER A VINE, FIGS? SO CAN NO FOUNTAIN BOTH YIELD SALT WATER AND FRESH.”

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“To tame,” is to restrain from doing hurt, it is to put a limit to the power of doing damage of any kind, it is to render harmless the ferocity and force that otherwise might and would have been unfettered and unrestrained. In this sense a lion or other wild beast may be said to be tamed when it is driven to restrain. within and kept within its own haunts, the forest or the jungle where it has its lair or its den. In its native state it is free to roam wherever its impulse may lead it; it has unlimited liberty to roam in pursuit of its prey wherever that prey may be found. The colonist, the pioneer comes on the scene, he finds the wild beast his enemy, and his first energies are directed to restraining it, and by acting upon its fears, as by the fires kept up all night, or by more aggressive measures to render it incapable of harm.

But there is another and a far higher sense in which the word is to be understood. "To tame" is not only to restrain from hurting, it is so to charm and persuade as to get the creature to allow itself to be put to use; so to overcome the ferocity and to overawe the will as to render both practically inoperative in the presence of the overcoming and over-awing power. You may confine the tiger within its jungle, and thus render it harmless; or you may bring it forth from its jungle, and, by infinite exertion, by power of eye, by strength of will, subjugate it so completely that it will crouch at your feet, rise when you tell it, or lie down. This latter "taming" is the more difficult and the more wonderful; and in all ages it has been ranked with the marvellous when the beasts and birds of prey, creeping things and things of the sea, have been, as if charmed out of themselves, put to the use of man: taught to hunt, as the lion by the ancient Egyptians; to become beasts of burden, as the elephant; to come and take food from your hand, as birds and fishes; or as the serpent, which the charmer can lull into harmless sleep. "Every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of man." Is there anything he cannot tame; any strength, subtlety, ferocity that baffles him?

Here we are confronted by the apostle's words concerning "the tongue of man." After all his boasting how weak he is; there is one thing he cannot restrain, cannot charm into acquiescence!

**Something no man can restrain or persuade.** "*It*" is untameable, unruly, poisonous, deadly; more powerful than any wild beast to do hurt; swifter than any winged thing to scatter firebrands, arrows, and death; more poisonous than the serpent's tooth.

"The tongue of man can no man tame"; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. It is an evil, a restless, unruly evil; it is a poison, a deadly poison; no authority can quell it, no appeal to fear can overcome it, no persuasion charm it: "the tongue of men can no man tame."

It is the tongue of other men that the apostle has mainly in his mind when he declares it to be untameable, not one's own tongue, for this may be tamed, has been tamed (Moses, whose

meekness was the result and the evidence of long years of self-control, of the government of the tongue: David with Shimei;

Samuel, when the people desired a king; our Saviour, who did not commit Himself to man because

**The tongue  
of other men.**

He knew what was in man, who when He was reviled, reviled not again). It is the tongue of other men that is untameable: and how true this is! "If he would but hold his tongue, things would be all right." "He is only damaging his own cause." "Why wont he weigh his words?" His enemies rejoice when he gets to his feet, his friends tremble for what he will say next! At a political meeting, or a church meeting, or a social gathering, how we wish we could control some tongue which is sure, ere long, to damage some good cause! It is no use, you cannot tame it, it will neither be constrained nor cajoled, it is untameable.

It is restless as well, for this is, perhaps, the better rendering, it has no bounds, and it flits from one thing to another with the speed of thought, and the more it does so, the more of an evil it is. Peter talked more than any of the other disciples, and there is more of error recorded of him than of any of the others.

**Restless.**

A restless, unruly evil, and so hurtful, the poison of asps, secretly spreading itself through the whole body. A slander, for example: you cannot detect and refute a vaguely diffused lie; it is here, it is there: the effect is seen in the cold looks, the averted gaze of those who once were friends, but *it, itself*, you cannot lay hold of, you cannot seize it and show it to others the falsehood it is! It works secretly, like the serpent's poison, and the man's reputation is dead, and he never knows who slew it.

**Poisonous.**

"'Twas slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue  
Out-venoms all the worms of Nile: whose breath  
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie  
All comers of the world: kings, queens, and states,  
Maids, matrons; nay, the secrets of the grave  
This viperous slander enters."

And then, further, this untameable, restless, poisonous tongue of man, how inconsistent it is, how glaringly does it contradict everything else that is seen in nature, animate or inanimate! Look at inanimate things: you never see a fountain sending out at the same place both salt water and fresh! Look **Inconsistent** at animate things, you never see a fig-tree bearing **and** olive berries, or a vine, figs. Nature is never **unnatural.** unnatural: but the tongue—out of the same mouth cometh blessing and cursing! With the tongue we bless God: the highest and holiest use to which we can put it, “our glory.” To bless God is to praise Him, it is to offer to Him adoration and praise, it is to adore Him for what He is, and for what He has done and is ever doing among the children of men: it is to acknowledge Him as God, and our God. In private, domestic, public worship we bless God with the tongue. But there is something else we do: “therewith curse we men which are made in the similitude of God.” To curse, this is the most wicked thing a man can do, and the most utterly useless. You can bless a man, really bless him, for you have God with you, but you cannot curse a man, just because you have God against you, and of all the wasted breath and words that sinful man will have to account for, those are the most utterly wasted which are spent in cursing.

But there is more than this in the words before us. When one man curses another, his curse does not strike against that other merely, it glances back upon Him in whose image this other was made, for to curse man is, in a real and awful sense, to curse God. Man is made in the image of God, man is the child, and, therefore, bears the likeness and impress of God; can you bless God and curse His image? To be glad when a man suffers (apart from the gladness of righteousness) is to wish that God were not so good, or so holy, or so tenderly compassionate as He is.

There are just two possible ways of it: if we bless God and curse man, either our blessing God is a hypocritical pretence, an empty sham, and it is only one thing, not two, that comes forth from our lips, because there is only one inner source from which the one thing comes: or there are two sources, one good and one bad, the blessing of God

**The  
alternative.**



from the one, the cursing of man from the other; and when any one so acts as the apostle supposes, it would be well for him to enquire into the reality of his religious professions; if I bless God and curse man, I am a hypocrite, *or*, my religion is of a very low type, I am of those who fear the Lord and serve other gods. (The Papists, after the massacre of St. Bartholomew: cursing men did they bless God, and was their praise acceptable in His sight? the men who profess profound reverence for God, and who yet despise and hold in contempt the lower orders, the masses, as if reverence for man were not an element of religion.)

Let these remarks suffice as illustrations of the apostle's short sermon on the tongue, its power, its power for good, its power for evil, its untameableness, its restlessness and deadly hurtfulness, its inconsistency and unnaturalness.

And let us ever remember that while under the influence of Christianity we may have got beyond the grosser forms of the sins he here exposes and condemns, we are yet liable to be overcome by the more subtle forms of them; and that even in the heart of the man who sincerely loves God there may lurk (and there may issue from it) what can but call forth utter disapproval. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Let us watch and pray lest we enter into temptation; let us put on the whole armour of God that we may withstand *this* wile of the devil; to think meanly of our fellow-man, made in the image of God, and then to dislike him, and then to wish him evil, imagining we can do this and bless God!

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

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THE BEAUTY OF GOODNESS.—"The good man is as beautiful as he is good. In the language of the apostle, 'God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body.' We can see the evidence of that even in what we behold around us. Goodness, everyone knows, has a tendency to make a person agreeable; even in his outward form it throws a holy lustre out of the eyes, it gives a noble aspect to the face and forehead."—Dr. BAYLEY.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM  
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

## No. II.

## Man Divinely Dignified.\*

"JOHN TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES WHICH ARE IN ASIA: GRACE BE UNTO YOU, AND PEACE FROM HIM WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME; AND FROM THE SEVEN SPIRITS WHICH ARE BEFORE HIS THRONE; AND FROM JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE FAITHFUL WITNESS, AND THE FIRST BEGOTTEN OF THE DEAD, AND THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH."—*Revelation* i. 4 and part of verse 5.

THESE words lead us to look on man as divinely dignified. Morally men are degraded creatures: they have degraded themselves and they degrade one another. Man may and should honour his brother, but he cannot dignify him; if he is to be dignified at all he must dignify himself, and this he can only do as God wills and helps him. In these words he appears as divinely dignified in two respects.

I.—Man is divinely dignified as a REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DIVINE. John is here employed to represent Divine things "*to the seven churches which are in Asia.*" The men who are employed by worldly kings—though in a moral sense contemptible beings—esteem it a great honour to be their representatives in foreign courts. But how infinite the honour of him who is employed by the King, "eternal, immortal, invisible."

\* In our last sketch, on page 184, second column, sixth line from top, read "*broke out in thunder,*" instead of "*shone out.*"

First: He represents Divine good. "*Grace be unto you, and peace.*" Divine favour and Divine bliss, the sum total these of the highest good in all worlds and times.

Secondly: He represents the Divine Being. He represents Him (1) In His absolute existence. "*From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.*" This is a periphrasis for the incommunicable name of Jehovah, the "I Am," the Unnameable and the Nameless, who is without beginning, without change, without succession, without end. Such a Being exists, and all men instinctively feel after Him and forge for Him names of great variety, but none appropriate,—the Unknown and the Unknowable. He represents Him (2) In His spiritual influence. "*From the seven spirits which are before His throne.*" Does the seven mean the totality, or variety in unity, the one essence multiform in influence? The One Eternal wields endless influences through every part of His universe, material, intellectual, and moral. The well has many streams, the sun unnumbered beams. He

represents Him (3) In His transcendent Messiah. "*And from Jesus Christ.*" Christ the Anointed, the Messiah of God. This divinely Anointed One is here set forth in four aspects. (a) In relation to truth. "*Who is the faithful witness.*" What is truth? Reality. Christ came to bear witness of the reality of realities. As a witness of God Christ was a *competent* witness. He was *intellectually* competent. He knew God. "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten of the Father," He alone knew the Absolute. He was *morally* competent. He had no motive to misrepresent Him. He alone had the moral qualifications fully to represent Him. You must be pure to represent purity, just to represent justice, loving to represent love. We have Christ here (b) In relation to immortality. "*The first begotten of the dead.*" How was He first begotten of the dead; for did not Lazarus rise from the grave? Not in time but in *importance*. He rose by His own power. No one else ever did. He arose as the representative of risen saints. "Our vile body shall be

fashioned and made like unto His glorious body." We have Christ presented here (c) In relation to empire. "*The Prince of the kings of the earth.*" All power is given unto Him. "He is exalted far above all heavens." Thrones, principalities, dominions, all are subject to Him.

II.—Man is divinely dignified as a representative of the Divine TO MAN. "*John to the seven churches which are in Asia.*" "The enumeration which presently follows," says *Dr. Vaughan*, "of the churches designed, shows that Asia is here used in its narrowest sense: not of the quarter of the globe so denominated, not even of Asia Minor, but of one

province on the western side of that country, expressly distinguished in two well known passages of the Acts of the Apostles, from Cappadocia and Pontus, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, from Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia."

Not only is he divinely dignified who is employed as the messenger of the Divine, but he to whom the Divine is sent. The seven congregations in Asia Minor were highly honoured of God as the objects of His redemptive message. How dignified of God is the man who is made at once the *recipient* and the *messenger* of Divine thoughts.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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### No. III.

### Christ and the Soul.

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"UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US, AND WASHED US FROM OUR SINS IN HIS OWN BLOOD, AND HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER; TO HIM BE GLORY AND DOMINION FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN. BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS; AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM, AND THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM: AND ALL KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL BECAUSE OF HIM. EVEN SO, AMEN."—*Rev. i. 6, 7.*

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THESE words suggest not a few thoughts concerning Christ and the soul.

I.—Christ is the LOVER of

the soul. "*Unto Him that loved us.*" Other beings may love the human soul—angels may, saints may—but no one

has loved it as Christ has. "*Unto Him that loved us.*"

First: He loved it with an *absolutely disinterested* love. Alas we know but little of disinterested affection. With all our love for each other there is generally a mixture of selfishness. But Christ had nothing to gain from the human spirit: its damnation would not diminish His blessedness; its salvation would not add to His ineffable bliss. He loved the soul for its own sake, as the offspring of God, endowed with wonderful capabilities, possessing in itself a fountain of influence that would spread indefinitely through all time and space.

Secondly: He loved it with a practically *self-sacrificing* love. It was not a love that existed merely as an emotion, or that even wrought occasional services; it was a love that led to the sacrifice of Himself. "He loved us, and gave Himself for us." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life."

Thirdly: He loved it with an *earnestly forgiving* love. "When we were enemies Christ died for the ungodly." He

loved those who were not only out of sympathy with Him, but who were in malignant hostility to Him; and His love was not only such as to incline Him to listen to petitions for pardon, but as inspired Him with an intense longing to forgive His enemies. "Herein is love." Who ever loved like this? Here is a love whose height, depth, length, breadth, passeth all knowledge.

II.—Christ is the *CLEANSER* of the soul. "*And washed us (R.V. "loosed") from our sins in His own blood.*" The moral restoration of the soul to the knowledge, image, and enjoyment of God, is represented in a variety of figures in the Bible, which is a highly figurative book. When the lost state of the soul is represented as a state of condemnation, then its restoration is represented as forgiveness or justification: when its lost state is represented as enmity to God, then its restoration is set forth under the metaphor of reconciliation: when its lost state is represented as a state of death or sleep, then its restoration is set forth as a quickening and awakening: when its



lost state is represented as a bondage, then its restoration is set forth as an enfranchisement: when its lost state is represented as a state of pollution or uncleanness, then its restoration is represented as a washing or a cleansing. All these figurative expressions represent one thing, the moral restoration of the soul; and this is spoken of in the text as wrought by Christ. "Washed us from our sins in His own blood." To be washed in blood is an expression that sounds incongruous and somewhat offensive; but it does not mean material blood, as the vulgar and the sensuous understand, but the *spiritual* blood, which is His moral life, His self-sacrificing love. The cleansing influence which is here applied to the blood is elsewhere applied to the "name of Christ." Now "ye are clean through the word I have spoken"; again, "Sanctified through Thy truth." Then to the "water of the word," "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." The "name," the "word," the "spirit," the "truth," which are represented in such pas-

sages as cleansing the soul, must of course be regarded as meaning essentially the same thing as "blood" here, which stands for the moral spirit of Christ, which is the same thing as Christ Himself. He it is who cleanseth the soul,—cleanseth it by His life. The figurative language here is purely Judaic, taken from the old Temple ceremonies; for "almost all things were purified by the law through blood." The grand mission and work of Christ are to put away sin from the soul. Sin is the guilt, sin is the curse, sin is the ruin of human nature. Sin is not so engrained, so wrought into the texture of the human soul that it cannot be removed; it can be washed out, it is separable from it, it can be detached.

III.—Christ is the ENNOBLER of the soul. "*Hath made us kings and priests unto God.*"

First: Christ makes souls "*kings.*" "I appointed you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto Me." Souls in their unregenerate state are paupers, prisoners, slaves; they are the mere creatures of internal passions and external circumstances. Christ en-

thrones the soul, gives it the sceptre of self-control, and enables it to make all things subservient to its own moral advancement.

Secondly: Christ makes souls "*priests*." True priests are in some respects greater than kings. Kings have to do with creatures, priests with God. Christ then is the Ennobler of souls. Worldly sovereigns may bestow titles of greatness on men, but they cannot bestow greatness itself. Christ bestows true greatness,—greatness of thought, heart, sympathy, aim, nature. He alone is great whom Christ makes great; all others are in the bonds of corruption.

IV.—Christ is the HERO of the soul. "*To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*" The souls whom Christ has loved, cleansed, and ennobled feel that He is their God, and render to Him the willing and everlasting homage of their nature. "*Unto Him that loved us, and washed (loosed) us from our sins in (by) His own blood.*" God in Christ is the grand object of human worship, and those whom Christ has thus restored cannot but worship Him.

Worship with them is not a service, but a spirit; is not obedience to a law, but the irrepressible instinct of a life.

V.—Christ is the HOPE of the soul. "*Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him.*" The high probability is that this is a prophetic description of Christ as He came in His providence to the destruction of Jerusalem. Between His final advent and this, there are so many striking resemblances that the description of the one is remarkably applicable to the other. Applying the words to the final advent, we have four facts concerning it.

First: Christ will come. Reason and conscience, as well as the Bible, teach this. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it; Job knew that He would stand again upon the earth. Christ and His apostles frequently and unequivocally taught it (Luke ix. 26).

Secondly: His coming will be terribly grand. "*On the clouds of Heaven.*" The grandest objects to mortal eyes are the heavens that encircle us. Their vast expanse and immeasurable

height, all radiant with rolling orbs in boundless variety, seem to bear us into the awful depths of infinitude. . Anything strange on the face of those heavens has always a power to strike terror on human souls. Christ is represented as coming on the clouds. Daniel, in a vision, beheld Him thus (Dan. vii. 13). Christ, Himself, declared that thus He would come (Mark xxiv. 30, and xxvi. 64). Angels have declared the same (Acts i. 11). John beheld Him on a "great whitethrone," so effulgent that the material universe melted away before it. How unlike the despised Galilean!

Thirdly: His coming will be universally observed. "*Every eye shall see Him.*" It is an event in which all are interested. Men *in all ages and lands*, from Adam "to the last of woman born." Men *of all social grades* and mental types are all vitally concerned in this stupendous event. Hence all shall see Him. (1) All shall see Him *immediately*. Now we see Him representatively by His

words, ordinances, and ministers. But then we shall see *Him*. (2) All shall see Him *fully*. Not one shall have a partial view, a mere passing aspect, but a full, complete vision. His full person will fall complete on every eyeball. (3) All shall see Him *impressively*. The universe had never had such an impressive sight of Him before.

Fourthly: His coming will be differently regarded. (1) To some it will be a scene of poignant distress. "*They also which pierced Him, and all kindreds (the tribes) of the earth, shall wail because of Him*" (mourn over Him). What inexpressible and inconceivable anguish will the rejectors of Christ experience now. (2) To others it will be welcomed with delight. "*Even so, Amen.*" The good, in all ages, have said, "Come, Lord Jesus." To His true disciples it will be a period in which all difficulties will be explained, all imperfections removed, all evils ended for ever.

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## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

## DEATH.

"IN THOSE DAYS WAS HEZEKIAH SICK UNTO DEATH," &c.

—2 *Kings* xx.

A THOUGHTFUL man might raise many questions on this chapter, indeed, on all the chapters in this book. He might ask who was the writer of this chapter, yea and of the entire book of Kings? A question this which has not been settled, and, perhaps, never will be. He might ask on what authority certain men, called prophets, such as Isaiah, speak as from Heaven, and say, "Thus saith the Lord"? Priests of all religions, for the most part, have spoken, and still speak, in this way. Such questions might open up discussions of critical and speculative interest, but would be of no practical benefit whatever. Anyhow, I forego them. My purpose all along has been to turn whatever I find in this, or any other book of the Old Testament, to some practical use.

Soon after the overwhelming destruction of Sennacherib and his army, as recorded in the preceding chapter, Hezekiah was seized with some severe disease which threatened the extinction of his life: death was before him. The account leads us to consider death in three aspects; as *consciously approaching*, as *temporarily arrested*, and as *ultimately triumphant*.

I.—As CONSCIOUSLY APPROACHING. "*In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.*" Mark here three things—

1. *When* he became conscious of its approach. "*In those days.*" "By this expression," says *Dr. Keil*, "the

illness of Hezekiah is merely assigned in a general manner to the same time as the events previously described. That it did not occur after the departure of the Assyrians, but at the commencement of the invasion of Sennacherib, *i.e.*, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, is evident from the sixth verse, both from the fact that in answer to his prayer, fifteen years more of life were promised him, and that he, nevertheless, reigned only twenty-nine years (chap. xviii. 2.), and also from the fact that God promised to deliver him out of the hand of the Assyrians, and to defend Jerusalem." Observe—

2. *How he became conscious of its approach.* "Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live." It needs no Isaiah, or any other prophet, to deliver this message to man. It comes to him from all history, from every graveyard, from every funeral procession, as well as from the inexorable law of decay working ever in his constitution. Yes, and not merely the announcement, but the

duty, "*Set thine house in order.*" (a) Men have much to do in this life. The "*house*" is 'out of order. (b) Unless the work is done here it will not be done yonder. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," &c. Observe—

3. *How he felt in the consciousness of its approach.* "*Then he turned his face to the wall.*" (a) He seems to have been overwhelmingly distressed. "*He wept sore.*" He turned away from the world, with all its multiplex concerns, from all his regal pomp, and peered into the invisible and the infinite. (b) He cried earnestly to heaven. "*He prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech Thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight.*" In his prayer we note the cry of nature. All men, even those who are atheistic in theory, are urged by the law of their spiritual nature to cry to heaven in great and conscious danger. In his prayer, we also note the breath of self-righteousness. "*Remember now how I have*



walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight." Though he had been free from some crimes, and had displayed some virtues, he had not done this. Perhaps no man that ever appeared on this earth,—save the "Son of Man"—could say, "*I have walked before Thee in truth with a perfect heart.*" Moral self-deception is one of the most prevalent sins of the human heart. Like the Pharisee in the Temple, we exult in virtues we have not.

Now death is approaching all men, whether we are *conscious* of the fact or not. The decree has gone forth, "*thou shalt die and not live.*" Death is ever coming with stealthy steps, yet with resistless force. He is coming always, whether at home or abroad, on ocean or on land, in society or in solitude, asleep or awake, he, the king of terrors, is coming. Look at death—

II. — AS TEMPORARILY ARRESTED. Five things are to be observed here—

First: The *primary Author* of its arrest. "*And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone*

*out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of My people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee.*"

How came Isaiah into possession of this knowledge, this "*word of the Lord,*" concerning Hezekiah's restoration? Was it by a dream, or by his own natural reasoning, or through a supernatural communication? On this point I confess my utter ignorance. The grand practical idea is that God can arrest death, and He only. Our times are in His hands. His constant visitation preserveth us. He is the absolute Master of death. At His bidding the most fragile creature may live for ever, the most robust expire. Observe—

Secondly: The *secondary means* of its arrest. "*Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.*" It would seem that the ancients, in the case of boils, abscesses, and such like, frequently applied figs to the affected parts, and no doubt

there was remedial virtue in the figs. For aught we know, there might be an antidote sleeping in plants and minerals for all our physical complaints. The man who lives by the medical art is untrue to his mission, and unfaithful to his patient, unless he, with an independent mind and a devoted heart, searches nature for those remedial elements with which she is charged. Observe—

Thirdly: The *extraordinary sign* of its arrest. "*And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that He hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in*

*the dial of Ahaz.*" Perhaps it was natural for a man, who when he felt himself on the brink of eternity was told he would recover, to desire some assurance of the fact so unexpected and yet so acceptable. Hezekiah desired a sign, and he had it. But what was the sign? We are told that the shadow on the dial-plate "*turned ten degrees backwards.*" How this? Did the sun recede, or was the rotation of the earth reversed? I know not, neither does it matter. It is sufficient to know that whether it was an illusion, or a natural eclipse of the sun, which some astronomers say did actually take place at this time (B.C. 689), or a physical miracle, it seems to have satisfied the king. It seems to be a law of mind, that phenomena which it earnestly expects often occur. "Be it to thee according to thy faith." Observe—

Fourthly: The *exact extension* of its arrest. "*I will add unto thy days fifteen years.*" The addition of fifteen years to man's brief existence in this life is a considerable item, and the more so when that fifteen years is added at

a period when the man has reached the zenith of his life, and passed through the chief training experiences. He who can add fifteen years to a man's life, can add eternity. "Our times are in His hands." Observe—

Fifthly: The *mental inefficiency* of its arrest. What spiritual good did these additional fifteen years accomplish for the king? They might have done much, they ought to have done much. But did they make him a *morally better man*, or an intellectually keener man? Not the former, I trow, for mark his vanity. The letters of Baladan, which the king of Babylon's son, Berodach-baladan, despatched to him, together with a present, so excited his egotism that he "*hearkened* (or as Isaiah renders it, "was glad") *unto them*," that is, the Babylonian deputies; and "*shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his*

*dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.*" Though he had paid such a large tribute to Sennacherib as seemed almost to have exhausted his treasury (chap. xviii. 16.), he had yet enormous possessions. We find from 2 Chron. xxxii. 23, that presents were brought to Hezekiah from various quarters. No doubt he had enormous wealth, rifled from the one hundred and four-score and five thousand corpses of Sennacherib's hosts that had been by the destroying angel, as in the twinkling of an eye, struck dead close to the gates of Jerusalem. All this, with an elated vanity, he exposed to the Babylonian magnates. Vanity, for many reasons, is one of the worst of all the bad elements of depravity; it is a species of moral badness, hideous to all beholders, and damnable to its possessor. Did these fifteen years added to his life, make Hezekiah an *intellectually keener man*? No; his judgment was not improved. In sooth, he seems to have lost that penetration, that insight into things and men, which could be discovered in the

eighteenth chapter, when he saw in the "brazen serpent" worshipped by his countrymen, a mere piece of brass, and called it "Nehushtan." How blind was he not to see that by exposing his treasures, he was whetting the avarice of his Assyrian enemies, tempting them to another invasion of his country. This, Isaiah told him: "*Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord.*"

Affliction does not always improve men, either morally or intellectually. Ah, me! how many, have I known who, when they have "*turned their face to the wall,*" writhing in agony, with grim death before them, have solemnly vowed improvement should they ever recover. They have recovered, and become worse in every respect than before. What boots fifteen years, or even a thousand years added to our existence, if our souls are not improved thereby! Look at death here—

III.—AS ULTIMATELY TRI-

UMPHANT. "*And Hezekiah slept with his fathers.*" The end of the fifteen years came, and he meets with the common destiny of all. The unconquered conqueror is not to be defrauded of his prey, however long delayed. Since death cannot be escaped by any, whether young or old, it has been asked, is there any advantage in longevity? Rather would it not be better to die in the first dawn of infancy, than in any subsequent period? Nay, peradventure, better not to have lived at all, for is life worth living, since death must come at last?

Now, in the face of this unconquered conqueror, submission is inevitable, acquiescence is religious. Let us await calmly and heroically until our change come.

"O, just when Thou shalt please,  
would I depart,  
My Father and my God! I would  
not choose,  
E'en if I might, the moment to un-  
loose  
The bonds which bind my weak and  
worthless heart  
From its bright home: so I have  
but a part,  
However humble there: it matters  
not,  
Or long or short my pilgrimage: my  
lot

“ Joyful or joyless : if the flowers  
 may start  
 Where’er I tread, or thorns obstruct  
 my path,  
 I look not at the present—many  
 years  
 Are but so many moments, though  
 of tears ;

“ My soul’s bright home a lovelier  
 aspect hath.  
 And if it surely shall be mine—and  
 then  
 For ever mine : it matters little  
 when.”

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## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

### No. VI.

### The Soul-Culture of the World.

“ FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN, TEACHING US THAT, DENYING UNGODLINESS AND WORLDLY LUSTS, WE SHOULD LIVE SOBERLY, RIGHTEOUSLY, AND GODLY, IN THIS PRESENT WORLD ; LOOKING FOR THAT BLESSED HOPE, AND THE GLORIOUS APPEARING OF THE GREAT GOD AND OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST ; WHO GAVE HIMSELF FOR US, THAT HE MIGHT REDEEM US FROM ALL INIQUITY, AND PURIFY UNTO HIMSELF A PECULIAR PEOPLE, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS SPEAK, AND EXHORT, AND REBUKE WITH ALL AUTHORITY. LET NO MAN DESPISE THEE.”—*Titus* ii. 11-15.

“ TAKING occasion from what he had just said of the connection between the conduct of Christians and the doctrine they professed to have received, and the connection of both with the glory of God, the apostle proceeds in these verses to ground the whole of his exhortations respecting

the behaviour of Christians in the essentially moral nature and design of the grace of God, as now manifested in the Gospel.”—*Dr. Fairbairn*. As if the apostle had said, you must exhort all orders, those of every age and condition, of each sex, bond as well as free, to struggle after



spiritual goodness because the "*grace of God*," or the Gospel, has come to you.

Our subject is the *soul-culture of the world*. Man requires training. He needs physical training, intellectual training, and, above all, spiritual training, the training of the soul into a higher life. We have here, the instrument, the process, and the end of true soul-culture.

I.—The INSTRUMENT of true soul-culture. What is it? Not science, legislation, philosophy, poetry, or any of the arts. What then? "*The grace of God*." What is that? Undoubtedly God's merciful plan and ministries to restore the fallen world. The Epiphany, or manifestation of this redemptive love of God for the world, we have in the advent and ministry of Christ to this earth. "*The grace of God*" stands for the Gospel. Concerning this instrument, observe—

First: It is the *love of God*. Divine love is the cause, the essence, and the effective energy of all God's redemptive ministries. Observe—

Secondly: It is the love of God *to save*. "*That bringeth*

(bringing) *salvation*." Salvation, that is, the restoration of man to the knowledge, the image, and the friendship of God. This is the aim and the work of the "*grace of God*." Without this grace there would be no salvation. Observe—

Thirdly: It is the love of God *revealed to all*. "*Hath appeared to all men*." The Gospel is not for a tribe, or a class, but for man as man. Like the concave heavens, it embraces the wide world, it is for "*all men*." Notice—

II.—The PROCESS of true soul-culture. This process involves three things.

First: The *renunciation of a wrong course*. "*Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts*." These expressions are an epitome of all that is sinful and wrong in human life. Are they not all-prevalent and all-potent? "*Ungodliness*," or practical atheism, where is it not? "*Worldly lusts*," the impulses of sensuality, selfishness, pride, and ambition, they are the springs of worldly action the world over. Now these are not only to be renounced, repudiated, but they are to

be defied, resisted, and renounced, they must be given up. "*Ungodliness*" must give way to true piety, "*worldly lusts*" must be renounced for impulses spiritual and Divine. The process of soul-culture involves—

Secondly: The adoption of a right course. "*We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*" It is not enough to renounce the evil, the good must be adopted. Negative excellence is not holiness. Strip the soul of all evil, and if it has not goodness in it, it "lacks the one thing" without which, Paul says, "I am nothing." We must live "*soberly*," holding a mastery over our own passions and impulses; "*righteously*," rendering to all men their due; "*godly*," practically realising the presence, the claims, and the love of God in our every-day life. All this "*in this present world*," or in the present course of things. This "*present world*" urgently requires such a course of life, for it is dangerous and transitory withal. The process of soul-culture involves—

Thirdly: The *fixing of the*

*heart upon a glorious future.* "*Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the* (appearing of the glory of our) *great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*" Are there two personalities here, or one? One, I think. "*The great God our Saviour*," or our great God and Saviour. The object of hope is, then, the future Epiphany of the Divine, all glorious to behold. To see the redemptive God as we have never yet seen Him in this morally hazy scene, this is the "*blessed hope.*" Such a hope implies (1) A vital interest in the Epiphany. We never hope for that for which we have not a strong desire. (2) An assurance that such an Epiphany will take place. Desire, of itself, is not hope. We desire many things we cannot hope for. It becomes hope when it is combined with expectation, and expectation implies the existence of grounds or reasons. That there will be such a manifestation, there are abundant reasons found in the apparent irregularities of Divine Providence in its operations here, in the instinctive longings of the human soul throughout

all lands and ages, as well as in the clear and frequent declarations of the written Word. Observe—

III.—The END of true soul-culture. “*Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.*” Observe—

First: The end is moral redemption. “*Redeem us from all iniquity.*” Redemption is not something that takes place outside of a man, its achievement is within. It is a raising of the soul from ignorance to knowledge, from vice to virtue, from selfishness to disinterestedness, from materialism to spirituality, from the mastery of the devil to the reign of God.

Secondly: The end is spiritual restoration to Christ. “*Purify unto Himself a peculiar people*” (a people for His own possession). Restoration to His likeness, His friendship, His service.

Thirdly: The end is complete devotedness to holy labour. “*Zealous of good works.*” What are good works?

Not any particular class of works. All works are good that spring from a good motive; and the good motive is supreme love for the Supremely Good. Works springing from this motive, whether manual or mental, social or personal, civil or ecclesiastic, public or private, all are good.

Fourthly: The end involves the self-sacrifice of Christ. “*Who gave Himself.*” Here is the grandest sacrifice ever made in the universe. Nothing grander could be. (1) *The greatest possession a man has is himself.* What are millions of acres, or the rule of kingdoms in the estimation of the owner, as compared to himself? “Skin for skin,” &c. (2) *The greatest self in the whole creation is Christ.* He was, in some special sense impenetrable to us, the only begotten Son of God, and He gave Himself. If He had given a universe, His gift would not have been equal to this. His gift teaches the enormity of moral evil.

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## Seedlings.

### The Unsearchableness of God.

“HIS GREATNESS IS UNSEARCHABLE.”—*Psalms* cxlv. 3.

GOD transcends all thoughts, notwithstanding this, men should search after His greatness.

I.—Searching after His greatness is a **RIGHTEOUS** occupation.

(1) It agrees with the profoundest instincts of the soul. (2) It is stimulated by the manifestations of nature. (3) It is encouraged by the declarations of the Bible. (4) It is aided by the revelations of Christ.

II.—Searching after His greatness is a **USEFUL** occupation. (1) There is no occupation so *quicken- ing* to the soul. Feeling after God is an inspiration. (2) There is no occupation so *humbling* to the soul. The idea of the Infinite drives all vanities from the soul, and brings it down from the heights of pride into the deepest

valley of humiliation. The idea burns up all egotism. (3) There is no occupation so *ennobling* to the soul. The idea which brings us down into the valley of humiliation, stimulates us to climb the heights of moral greatness. The soul becomes noble in the conscious presence of God's greatness.

III.—Searching after His greatness is an **ENDLESS** OCCUPATION. “Canst thou, by searching, find out God?” All holy intelligences have ever been pursuing this work. The endlessness of this pursuit agrees with (1) the inexhaustible powers of our nature, (2) the strong instinct for mystery within us.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.  
LONDON.

### Sin a Provocation and a Misery.

“THE LORD IS GRACIOUS, AND FULL OF COMPASSION ; SLOW TO ANGER, AND OF GREAT MERCY.”—*Psalms* cxlv. 8.

THE words imply—

I.—THE PROVOCATIVE POWER OF SIN. “*Slow to anger.*” God is susceptible of provocation. (1)

He is *not cold intellect*. He is infinite susceptibility. He *feels* all as well as knows all. (2) He is *not indifferent to moral conduct*.

The holy pleases Him, the impure and unrighteous pain Him. "Do not this abominable thing which I hate." The sinful conduct of man excites His displeasure. (3) His nature *revolts at sin*. He rises up in hostility to it. (4) However great His displeasure *He controls it*. He does not, like man, give way to anger. Man does so because he lacks the self-controlling power. He has infinite self-control, "*He is slow to anger*." The words imply—

II.—THE MISERY-PRODUCING POWER OF SIN. "*The Lord is gracious and full of compassion*." God is good to all, to the highest

angels, but compassionate only to the suffering and distressed. Sin produces this, and has filled the human world with wretchedness. It has turned our Eden into a vale of tears. The Infinite, instead of striking us down in His anger, bears with us in His compassion. He is "long-suffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "Fury is not in Me," saith the Almighty. His nature is free from the malign, but full of the merciful.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

## Twofold Worship.

"ALL THY WORKS SHALL PRAISE THEE, O LORD; AND THY SAINTS SHALL BLESS THEE."—*Psalms* cxlv. 10.

I.—The worship of God's WORKS. "*All Thy works shall praise Thee*." They worship Him—

First: Because they *reveal* Him. All, great and small, sentient and insentient, reveal Him, His wisdom, goodness, and power. They reveal Him as the building the architect, the sculpture, the music, the painting, reveal the artist; the book the author, &c. "The heavens declare the glory of God." They worship Him—

Secondly: Because they *obey* Him. All move in exact accord with the laws that are impressed on their nature. Oceans ebb and flow, the heavenly bodies revolve and shine, seasons come and go, all in obedience to His will. They never transgress His orders, or neglect His behests. "*All Thy works shall praise Thee*."

II.—The worship of God's CHILDREN. "*Thy saints shall bless Thee*."



First: They reveal *Him more fully*. The child is a higher revelation of the father than all his works of genius, however varied and abundant. "We are His offspring." There is more of God seen in the rays of reason, the sparks of fancy, the sensibility of conscience, the volitions of will,

of one soul, than in all the beauty of the landscape, or the brightness of the heavens.

Secondly: They obey *Him more loftily*. They obey Him (1) intelligently, (2) consciously, (3) freely, and (4) happily.

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### God's Rule.

"THE GLORY OF THY KINGDOM."—*Psalm cxlv. 11.*

THE subject of these words is the majesty of Divine rule or kingdom. See its glory—

I.—In the UNIVERSALITY OF ITS EXTENT. His kingdom extends over all, over all matter, and over all mind. It includes the microscopic atom and the mightiest orb; the lowest fiend and the sublimest angel. See its glory—

II.—In the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ITS FOUNDATION. God has a right to rule the universe. (1) On the ground of *proprietaryship* He owns all. (2) On the ground of *capacity*. No one else has the power. (3) On the ground of *character*. He is infinitely good. See its glory—

III.—In the BENEVOLENCE OF ITS OPERATIONS. Unlike all human kings, He rules not for His own aggrandisement or in-

terest, but simply for the good of His subjects. Were the best of human sovereigns to resign their rule, their country would, probably, be blest thereby; but were He, the Infinite Ruler, to resign, the whole universe would rush into anarchy and ruin. See its glory—

IV.—In the INDESTRUCTIBLENESS OF ITS NATURE. Human kingdoms have in them the seeds of decay, they chase each other from the scene, like the clouds before the wind. All of them are but as little bubbles on the stream, by a breath, or a touch, they are broken and lost. But His kingdom will endure for ever. "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Thy dominion endureth through all generations."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.  
LONDON.

## The Seven Sayings from the Cross.

### I.—The Prayer for Forgiveness.

“AND JESUS SAID: FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO,” &c.—*Luke xxiii. 34.*

How truly noble Jesus here appears! How truly Divine! When men are dying they pray for personal forgiveness, but the Son of Man has no need of this, and is absorbed in prayer for others—even His crucifiers. May we examine this sublime yet simple prayer? Yes, but it must be with great reverence. It will teach us, if we drink of its spirit, how to suffer, pray, forgive, and die. As we listen to this prayer, we are reminded of—

#### I.—MAN'S GREAT SIN.

1. *At the cross all sin seems focussed.* Those who gathered there were typical sinners—the soldiers, acting under others, the populace wrongly influenced, the ruling class, using their power against Christ, the priests, the very ringleaders in this great wrong. All were sinning against God, by trying to rid themselves of Christ. In this they acted (*a*) hastily, (*b*) with prejudice and passion, (*c*) unjustly, (*d*) harshly; and these are the characteristics of all sin.

2. *Their ignorance was no ex-*

*cuse.* It made the sin worse, for they were blinded by pride and self-will. “We must account at the day of judgment (says Matthew Henry), not only for the knowledge we had and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had, and would not.”

3. *What need, then had they for forgiveness?* A need unseen, unfelt, and, as yet, unknown; but none the less great and real. Their need, then, is akin to ours now.

#### II.—GOD'S GREAT PREROGATIVE.

1. *He only can forgive against whom the sin is committed.* What erroneous ideas are often entertained concerning God's attitude towards sinners. Yet the Scriptures assure us that He is *faithful* to forgive (1 John i. 9.), *just* to forgive (1 John i. 9.), *ready* to forgive (Psalm lxxxvi. 5.), and even *eager* to forgive (Isaiah i. 18; lv. 7.) And Christ's prayer stamps all this on our hearts, for He would not have prayed for an impossibility. If there is one thing more certain than another about God, it is that He is not

vindictive, harsh, and hard to move. On the contrary, He is good, gracious, generous.

2. *The prerogative of forgiveness is not often exercised by an earthly monarch*, but God has made provision to exercise it constantly and safely. Sometimes on the accession of a king, forgiveness is granted to a certain number of prisoners. It was from His cross-throne that the dying, yet living, lips of Jesus emphasised in His prayer-proclamation the royal prerogative of forgiveness.

3. *God's forgiveness is complete and conditional*, and it is followed by momentous consequences.

III.—CHRIST'S GREAT INTERCESSION. In this prayer Christ appears as the Great High Priest. He presents Himself before God—not without blood—on our behalf. Those around the cross little knew what communications were going on between earth and heaven for them.

1. *To what a height this prayer rises*. How far from mortal thought and human habit! How sublime it is in its tenderness and self-abnegation! How God-like! "Was ever love like this?"

2. *To what a depth it descends*. Even to murder. What depths of condescension, patience, submission, gentleness, pity, are in this prayer. We must feel them

to fathom them. This intercession dives beneath all sin, its arms are underneath all sinners. Who need despair? None.

3. *To what a length it reaches*. It was not exhausted when it included those who took part in the actual crucifixion. It comes down all the ages. At the cross it was dropped like a stone in the ocean, but its ripples of love will widen till they touch every shore. And it is "as mighty at its farthest point as at its centre."

4. *To what a breadth it extends*. Forgiveness is the essence of all true blessing. He who has this, has peace with God—Rest in Christ—Comfort in the Holy Ghost. Forgiveness is the breath of life, the seal of love, the secret of service, the spring of devotion, the antidote of fear, the sunlight of the heart, the flower that wafts its fragrance along the valley of the shadow of death, and the passport to the home of the many resting-places above. Are you forgiven? The thought of being the subject of the prayers of loved ones, has often arrested the careless, reclaimed the erring, and comforted the desponding. Remember this great prayer of the dying Saviour, and resist not its potent instruction and tender pleading.

WALTER J. MAYERS.  
BRISTOL.

## II.—The Penitent Thief.

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“AND HE SAID, JESUS, REMEMBER ME WHEN THOU COMEST IN THY KINGDOM. AND HE SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY I SAY UNTO THEE, TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.”—*Luke xxiii. 42, 43. (R.V.)*

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LET our enquiries gather round this dying, praying, penitent thief. (a) *Who* was he? A Jew or a Gentile? (b) *What* had he done? Possibly he had lived a brigand life, and doubtless was a murderer. (c) *Where* was he? On a cross, and to a certainty dying. (d) *How* did he act? With courage—confessing his sin—condemning himself—showing compassion for Christ. All this awakens our surprise and quickens our interest, and we proceed to ask, (e) *By what means* was he led to manifest this spirit? Had he heard Christ preach? Had his imprisonment broken his spirit and led him to reflect? Had he been melted by the prayer, “Father, forgive”? Had he recognised Christ as the Preacher whose wayside words had been to him like nails fastened in a sure place? Was he impressed by the dignity and patience of Christ, and did he read these in the light of the inscription on the cross? or had suffering subdued him, and forced him, as he thought of the past, to prepare for the future? All these may have been

means used by God for reclaiming this soul, but behind them was the Divine sovereignty leading, convicting, enlightening. We must not place too much to the credit of this man, but we shall not err in saying that he had, what all ought to have, enough knowledge to see himself as a sinner, and enough wisdom to apply to Christ for help and deliverance. Let us note here—

## I.—A SINFUL MAN’S PRAYER.

“Jesus, remember me.” “It was the offerer’s last, yet perhaps his first prayer, perhaps, indeed, the only prayer he ever breathed.”

1. To the life of prayer this will make, for all, a good beginning, and there is no better ending. *Do not say you cannot pray, until you have appropriated these words.*

2. This cry is addressed to a king. Yes, and the poorest beggar may thus have audience with the Lord of all. *Do not say you have no friendship with royalty—does not Jesus still live?*

3. The prayer displays a humble spirit, yet it is in itself very full and comprehensive. If Christ

remembers us, what matters it who may forget us. His remembrance is not barren and unfruitful. It has all power and riches at its command. "Christ's memory of a penitent soul is a guarantee of that soul's salvation." *Do not say you are unhonoured if you are held in the memory of the Saviour.*

4. How short and simple is this prayer. It is just such a prayer as a sinner could pray, a penitent would pray, we all should pray. *Do not say you know how to pray until you have learnt the meaning of these three words—"Jesus—remember—me."*

II.—A DYING MAN'S FAITH. The Revised Version gives a clear meaning to the sentence which accompanied the short prayer. It reads, "When Thou comest in Thy kingdom." *Such words are evidence of some faith.* It may be dim, uninstructed, undeveloped, but there it is—"the assurance of things hoped for." The words certainly wear every appearance of faith. (a) In Christ's Messiahship; (b) In Christ's future glory; (c) In Christ's power to confer favours. This man's dying body held a precious spirit just beginning truly to live. Prayer and faith are here going hand in hand.

And the faith was exercised amid difficulties. Christ was stretched on the cross. Does this

look like "coming in a kingdom"? No, but faith forgets all difficulties, overleaps all obstacles, pays no heed to the visible, but fastens on the promise, anchors there, and then rides in safety amid all the billows.

The wants of this dying man remind us at once of the "sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow."

III.—A PENITENT MAN'S BLESSING. "To-day shall thou be with Me in Paradise." This promise—(1) gave him much more than he sought. (2) Was to be speedily enjoyed—"To-day." (3) Was Divinely assured—"Verily." (4) Contained the perfection of all blessing—"With Me." What comfort for a dying man. He received it in silence. He was "dumb with praise." What a grand triumph for the cross! It was but the beginning of myriads. If Jesus Christ could save a robber—why not anyone? If Jesus Christ could save a dying man—why not a living man? If Jesus Christ could save from the cross—why not from the throne? Is salvation *by works*? How then was this man saved? Is salvation *by grace through faith*? Why then should any despair?

WALTER J. MAYERS.

BRISTOL.



## Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew xxvii. 51.

*(Palm Sunday.)*

"AND, BEHOLD, THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE WAS RENT IN TWAIN FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM."

THE arrangements of the Temple service, for a carefully graduated approach to the presence of manifested Deity, were designed, not to foster a vague sense of mystery, but to sustain the idea, to deepen the conviction, that He who was thus so scrupulously separated from contact with sinful man was the thrice-holy Lord; that He was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and was one on whom the eyes of the unpurified might not look. The veil separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place, the inner from the innermost sanctuary. The former was the *human*, the latter the *Divine* compartment of the meeting-place of God and man: the one was the ante-chamber, the other the audience-chamber itself of the Majesty of Heaven. At the time when this most significant incident occurred there would be priests within the sacred enclosure of the Holy Place: it was afternoon: it was drawing toward the time of evening sacrifice: they would be profoundly moved, excited by what they had seen or heard of that great day's proceedings;—possibly rejoicing that He of whose

piercing truth they were so much afraid was condemned to death. And when, suddenly, as if grasped and rent by unseen hands, that most sacred veil, interposed between God's own chosen residence and their most sacred sphere, was torn in twain from the top to the bottom, they *must* have been struck with consternation; they *may* have begun to wonder whether that hand which once wrote on Belshazzar's palace wall, was not now intimating that the days of the old ritual system were numbered and that *it* also was "finished." The rending of the veil suggests to us—

I.—THAT GOD HAD ADOPTED A NEW METHOD OF ASSERTING HIS HOLINESS, and of impressing it on the mind and heart of the world. The great fundamental doctrine of the holiness of God, which had been taught by the sacrifices and seclusions of the Temple, was not without its effect upon the Jewish mind; no other nation had such a conception of the purity and righteousness of God as Israel had. But this foundation truth had now received a far stronger sanction, and was now to rest on another basis. Instead of a curtained chamber and a blood-besprinkled mercy-seat providing its illustration for a small nation, the supreme fact of a Divine Saviour's sacrifice of Himself for

the sin of the world was to kindle the imagination, to instruct the mind, to cleanse the heart of the whole human race; IT was to write the holiness of God in characters which should be legible to all mankind, to proclaim it in a voice which should reach the ear of the remotest lands and the most distant generations. How holy is the Holy One, how heinous and intolerable is all sin seen to be in the light of the cross of Christ.

II.—THAT GOD HAD NOW PROVIDED ANOTHER AND BETTER WAY OF MERCY TO MANKIND. As the mercy-seat covered the ark in which were the two tables with the ten commandments, so does mercy ever rest on righteousness, for it has no meaning without it, and so does the mercy of God triumph over the law of God. When the veil of the temple was rent in twain and the way was thus opened to the mercy-seat, there was an indication that the way was now open to the mercy-seat, to that awful and all-availing sacrifice of which the sprinkled blood (on the great Day of Atonement) was but a feeble foreshadowing.

III.—THAT THE WAY UNTO THE HOLY ONE HIMSELF IS NOW OPEN TO ALL THAT WILL ENTER. The veil of the temple was more than a symbol: it was the means and instrument of exclusion,

through it no prying eyes might peep, no ambitious step intrude. When that veil was rent, it was Divinely signified that the way into the Holiest of all was now open to every one. Not, now, one man on one day of the year, but all men, at all times, are free to draw nigh unto the living God, to seek His mercy, to implore His blessing, to present to Him the heart's thanksgiving, to offer or to renew the sacred vow of self-surrender. There are, to-day, busy hands mistakenly and mischievously employed in restoring that veil, wishing to re-establish the system of priestly mediation and of sacrifice through consecrated officials. But what God, in His grace, has put asunder, let no man, in his presumptuous meddling, seek to join again. And while sternly deprecating this theological reaction, let us not be negligent of the religious privilege of which the rent veil speaks, but come "boldly" and continually unto that throne of grace between which and our own sin-troubled, striving souls there now hangs no intervening veil. Reverently and rejoicingly should we draw near to present those spiritual sacrifices,—humility, gratitude, adoration, supplication, dedication, with which God is well pleased.

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## John xx. 22, 23.

*(First Sunday after Easter.)*

THERE are in human life beneficent compensations. "The cold climate invigorates. The barren soil does not breed fevers and scorpions." Every shadow has a brightness close at hand. The losses and sorrows of life are followed by new gains and joys. Every man who is wise knows that too much ease and advantage is apt to send him to sleep, while difficulties and disadvantages develope his manhood and bring out his powers. While our teacher, brother, friend is with us, and we can see him and hear him, we often fail to know his true character and enter into closest fellowship with him; but when he is gone from us, and silence and loneliness are around us, we get a new vision of him, and wake up to the knowledge of his worth. With outward nearness there is often spiritual distance from each other, while with outward separation there often comes spiritual oneness. When an angel leaves us, as we sit and weep over our loss he often comes back with brighter face and a more sacred beauty.

This is what the disciples of Christ found. Christ had left them, having finished His life on the cruel cross of Calvary. It was a dark hour to them. But in the midst of their sorrow and loneliness He comes back to them, more their

Friend and Brother and Lord than ever. He has risen again to them: returned as a spiritual presence to inspire and teach and sanctify them.

I.—THE COMMUNICATION OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST TO HIS DISCIPLES. "He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Spirit." The spirit of one whom we love can pass into us and rule us. Paul calls Timothy "his son in the Gospel." What did he mean? He meant that Timothy had become imbued with his aims, had caught the tone of his mind, and was filled with his spirit. When the sons of the prophets came out to greet Elisha, they said, "The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha." It is said that it was John Wesley who inspired Howard with the burning desire to reform the prisons of Europe. Wesley was himself a prison philanthropist. He might be seen in the cells of Newgate, speaking to the lost and degraded ones of Him who was the Friend of sinners, and of the Father in heaven who shuts the door against no returning prodigal. And the spirit that animated Wesley passed into the philanthropist, Howard. There is such a thing as a man's communication of himself to others. We see this taking place every day: teachers inspiring their scholars, fathers inspiring their children, commanders inspiring their soldiers.

And Christ, only in a far higher and fuller degree, breathed on His disciples and communicated to them His own spirit,—that spirit of love and goodness and self-sacrifice which had always dwelt in Him. This is, too, a great reality for us. Christ is the Vine, and those who are His disciples are the branches. To us, even as to the disciples who stood around Him, His word is, “Lo, I am with you.”

II.—THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST GIVES THE POWER OF MORAL DISCERNMENT. “Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.” “Whom you absolve from sin, declare to be right, pronounce free from blame, he is so: and whom you declare to be wrong, upon whom you fasten guilt, whom you condemn as sinful, he is so” (see Matt. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18). By virtue of the new spiritual life and new spiritual insight which came to them with the spirit of Christ, their decisions in cases of right and wrong would be in accordance with the judgment of Heaven. They had the power of the keys; what they “remitted,” “loosed,” would in reality be good and true; and what they “retained,” “bound,” would in reality be evil and false. Through the new inspiration which they received they could be wise

and safe teachers and guides, declaring with authority what was worthy of approval and what was worthy of condemnation.

This has been verified. The moral decisions of the apostles—their teachings with regard to the rightness or wrongness of certain customs and habits and certain classes of men—have on the whole been ratified in heaven; have on the whole been ratified by the voice of Providence in the subsequent history of mankind. They have been “the lights of the world; the salt of the earth.”

The spirit of discernment was not confined to the apostles; it did not cease with them. There is a similar inspiration for men in every age; not merely for men who are priests and ministers, but for men who are writers, statesmen, poets, philanthropists. In every age there have been men who have stood forth as leaders and guides to the world; they have given their decisions upon certain men and actions, and their decisions have been sanctioned in heaven and adopted in human history. But mark, it is not by hereditary descent, or ecclesiastical relationship, or human ordination that a man gets this sacred power of insight, but by the inspiration of Christ, and by that alone.

THOMAS HAMMOND.  
WOODFORD.

## 1 Peter ii. 25.

(*The Second Sunday after Easter.*)

## "THE SHEPHERD OF YOUR SOULS."

THIS name of Christ is irradiated by our memories of the twenty-third psalm, and of the parables of our Lord concerning the Shepherd, who is at once Great, and True, and Good. In our present meditation we notice concerning this Divine shepherding—

I.—THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL has a Shepherd who knows it and cares for it. Of this we are assured at once by the Psalmist's designation of God as "my" Shepherd, and by the declarations of Jesus as to the Shepherd knowing His sheep by name, and caring if "one" go astray. This individualising of the sheep was a fact in the relationship of ancient and Eastern flocks to their shepherds (Aristotle, Theocritus, &c.). This is an illustration of each soul's relation to Christ.

II.—THE SINFUL SOUL has a Shepherd who seeks its rescue even by His own death. Let there be a sheep lost, and the shepherd does not forget it, ignore it, still less despise it. No, he seeks it! So the Son of Man seeks that which is lost until He finds it. The care of Christ for the soul is seen in that like a Shepherd (1) He follows it. (2) He dies for it.

III.—THE RESTORED SOUL has a Shepherd who is filled with Divine satisfaction at its recovery. Picture the shepherd's satisfaction at the recovery of the straggler he has been seeking, &c. So when the soul of man is in the Good Shepherd's arms, there is not only peace to the soul, but a rush of joy in the Shepherd's heart. "He rejoiceth," &c.

IV.—THE LONELY SOUL has a Shepherd who will meet all the necessities of its nature. He meets the wants of its love by what He enables it to find (1) in Himself; (2) in the flock. So it is no more desolate, helpless, bleating out on the dark mountains its sad alone! alone! but the music of its heart is, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

V.—THE LOYAL SOUL has a Shepherd who will provide for all its wants. What are they? Safety; food; guidance. The Duke of Alva, who had granted some prisoners their lives, was besought by them for some bread to keep them from starving. His reply was, "I promised to spare your lives, not to give food." This is not the promise of "the Shepherd of your souls." "Fear not, little flock," &c. "My God shall supply all your need," &c. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."

EDITOR.



## Breviaries.

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### Christ Stilling the Storm.

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"WHAT MANNER OF MAN IS THIS, THAT EVEN THE WIND AND THE SEA OBEY HIM?"—*Mark* iv. 41.

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WE may regard—I.—The miracle as a significant FACT. (1) Such storms in the inland sea were of common occurrence. (2) Such exercise by Christ of power over material nature was also of common occurrence, *e. g.*, water made wine; multitudes miraculously fed; diseased healed; dead revived. They all indicate our Lord's relation to the material universe to be in accordance with John's doctrine of the Logos, and Paul's of The Pleroma. We may well say (*a*) in admiration, then in (*b*) enquiry, "What manner of man is this?" But we notice—II.—The fact as a significant PARABLE. Probably all Christ's miracles are acted predictions, or at least acted parables. This one seems specially likely to be (1) Because of correspondence between material and spiritual storms. *Daniel* vii. 2; *Isaiah* lvii. 20; *Revelation* xiii. 1. (2) Because of the agitation of fear in the bosom of the disciples, and afterwards of anxiety and insanity in Gadara, to which Christ immediately turned as Divine Pacificator. In view of all storms, personal and social, this miracle reveals Christ—First, as *Our Hope*. He only can silence. Second, as *Our Model*. His courage, born of faith and disinterestedness, we must make ours if we would say to uprising passions, "Be muzzled, ye maniac"; to the cares and woes and perturbations of others, "Be still."

EDITOR.

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### An Inspiring Privilege and Assurance.

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"CALL UPON ME IN THE DAY OF TROUBLE: I WILL DELIVER THEE."  
—*Psalms* l. 15.

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No being but God dare use such unqualified language as this. I.—The TIME referred to. "The day of trouble." Nobody grows gray without having felt the gloom and pressure of such a day. The day of trouble does not appear to be governed by the swing of the pendulum, or the revolution of a planet. It may dawn any time, and often its sun and moon appear to stand still. "The day of trouble" has in it varied

experiences. The day of (1) *Conviction and penitence.* (2) *Remaining depravity.* (3) *Temptation.* (4) *Perplexity and doubt.* (5) *Mysterious providences.* (6) *Affliction and bereavement.* (7) *Business perplexities.*

II.—The DIRECTION given. “Call upon Me.” The *manner* of calling. (a) Humbly. (b) Believingly. (c) Perseveringly,—Jacob-like, &c.

III.—The GRACIOUS PROMISE. “I will deliver thee.” He knows the *very roots of tendency, facts, character, circumstances* which give rise to “the day of trouble,” and “He knows *how* to deliver.” (a) By pardon. (b) By cleansing. (c) By resisting grace. (d) By stronger faith. (e) By the light, comfort, and guidance of His Holy Spirit. (f) By so overruling “the day of trouble” as to cause it to work together for good. Our knowledge is so limited that we cannot always distinguish between “the day of trouble” that we make ourselves, and “the day of trouble” which God brings upon us for correction and discipline. It is a great comfort, as taught in the text, that God does not appear to distinguish between them either. “Call upon Me in the day of trouble,”—no matter who, or what made it, whether your own imprudence or My wisdom, and “*I will deliver thee.*” It is the *calling spirit* that God seeks to evoke.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

## The Sleep and Dream of Ungodly Men.

“AS A DREAM WHEN ONE AWAKETH,” &c.—*Psalms lxxiii. 20.*

SHARPE renders this verse, “As a dream of one awaking, O Lord in anger Thou wilt despise their image.” I.—THE UNGODLY ARE ASLEEP. (1) *Not their animal nature.* They are often fully awake to material things, &c.

(2) *Their spiritual nature is asleep.* That side which should be open to Divine influences—the Godward side; they hold no communion with God, have no longings for a nobler, purer, holier life, &c.

II.—IN THIS SLEEP THEY DREAM. They fancy material things, things which are seen, are real, abiding, and secure, that the pleasures of this world will continue to satisfy.

III.—AT DEATH THE UNGODLY WILL AWAKE. Their all is in this world, and lo, death comes and strips them of all they valued, and takes them into the presence of God spiritually naked, and morally destitute, and their fancied security, pleasure, and prosperity passes away as a dream of one awaking; “Like the baseless fabric of a vision.” How much better to have this awakening here!

NEWENT.

W. HARRIS.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

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### SCRAP-BOOK.

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“*RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE HABITATION OF HIS THRONE.*”—*Ps. xcvi. 2.*

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IN this, God's world, with its wide, whirling eddies and mad-foam oceans, where men and nations perish as if without law, and judgment for an unjust thing is sternly delayed, dost thou think that there is therefore no justice? It is what the fool hath said in his heart. It is what the wise, in all times, were wise because they denied, and knew for ever not to be. I tell thee again, there is nothing else but justice. One strong thing I find here below: the just thing, the true thing. My friend, if thou hadst all the artillery of Woolwich trundling at thy back in support of an unjust thing, and infinite bonfires visibly waiting ahead of thee, to blaze centuries long for thy victory on behalf of it, I would advise thee to call, halt! to fling down thy baton, and say, “In God's name, No!” Thy “success?” Poor devil, what will thy success amount to? If the thing is unjust, thou hast not succeeded; no, not though bonfires blazed from north to south, and bells rang, and editors wrote leading articles, and the just things lay trampled out of sight to all mortal eyes, an abolished and annihilated thing. Success? In a few years thou wilt be dead, and dark, all-cold, eyeless, deaf; no blaze of bonfires, ding-dong of bells, or leading articles visible or audible to thee again at all for ever. What kind of success is that? It is true all goes by approximation in this world; with any not insupportable approximation we must be patient. There is a noble conservatism as well as an ignoble. Would to heaven, for the sake of conservatism itself, the noble alone were left, and the ignoble, by some kind, severe hand were ruthlessly topped away, forbidden ever more to shew itself! For it is the right and noble alone that will have victory in this struggle; the rest is wholly an

obstruction, a postponement and fearful imperilment of the victory. Towards an eternal centre of right and nobleness, and of that only, is all this confusion tending. We already know whither it is all tending; what will have victory, what will have none! The heaviest will reach the centre. The heaviest, sinking through complex, fluctuating media and vortices, has its deflections, its obstructions, nay, at times, its resistances, its reboundings, whereupon some blockhead shall be heard jubilating: "See, your heaviest ascends!" But at all moments it is moving centrewards, fast as is convenient for it; sinking, sinking; and by laws older than the world, old as the Maker's first plan of the world, it has to arrive there. Await the issue. In all battles, if you await the issue, each fighter has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the same. He has fought, and in exact proportion to all his right, he has prevailed. His very death is no victory over him. He dies, indeed, but his work lives, very truly lives. Fight on, thou brave, true heart, and falter not, through dark fortune and through bright. The cause thou fightest for, so far as it is true, no further, yet precisely so far, is very sure victory. The falsehood alone of it will be conquered, will be abolished, as it ought to be: but the truth of it is part of nature's own laws, co-operates with the world's eternal tendencies, and cannot be conquered.

THOMAS CARLYLE.



"WHO COVERETH THE HEAVEN WITH CLOUDS."—*Psalms* cxlvii. 8.



It is a strange thing how little, in general, people know about the sky. It is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, more for the sole and evident purpose of talking to him and teaching him, than in any other of her works, and it is just the part in which we least attend to her. Every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered if, once in three days, or thereabouts, a great, ugly,

black rain-cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again till next time, with, perhaps, a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And, instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty that it is quite certain that it is all done for us, and intended for our perpetual pleasure. And every man, wherever placed, however far from other sources of interest, or of beauty, has this doing for him constantly. The noblest scenes of the earth can be seen and known but by few; it is not intended that men should live always in the midst of them; he injures them by his presence; he ceases to feel them if he be always with them. But the sky is for all; bright as it is, it is not too bright nor good for human nature's daily food; it is fitted in all its functions for the perpetual comfort and exalting of the heart; for soothing it and purifying it from its dross and dust. Sometimes gentle, sometimes capricious, sometimes awful; never the same for two moments together; almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness, almost Divine in its infinity, its appeal to what is immortal in us is as distinct as its ministry of chastisement or of blessing to what is mortal is essential. And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations; we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than to brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme, that we are to receive more from the covering vault than the light and the dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accidents, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. If, in our moments of utter idleness and insipidity, we turn to the sky as a last resource, which of its phenomena do we speak of? One says it has been wet, and another it has been windy, and another it has been warm. Who, among the whole chattering crowd, can tell me of the forms and precipices of the chain of tall white mountains that gilded the horizon at noon yesterday? Who saw the narrow sunbeam



that came out of the south, and smote upon their summits until they melted and mouldered away in a dust of blue rain? Who saw the dance of the dead clouds when the sunlight left them last night, and the west wind blew them before it like withered leaves? All has passed unregretted or unseen; or, if the apathy be ever shaken off, even for an instant, it is only by what is gross or what is extraordinary; and yet it is not in the broad and fierce manifestations of the elemental energies, not in the clash of the hail, nor the drift of the whirlwind that the highest characters of the sublime are developed. God is not in the earthquake nor in the fire, but in the still small voice. They are but the blunt and the low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lamp-black and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty; the deep and the calm and the perpetual; that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood; things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally; which are never wanting and never repeated; which are to be found always, yet each found but once. It is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given.

RUSKIN.



*"Ye search the Scriptures . . . and ye will not come to Me."*—JOHN v. 39, 40.—"The Bible becomes dearer and more sacred to me the more I read it; I have no sympathy with its arraigners, even too little with its critics. Yet I feel compelled often to stand with both against those who turn it into a god, and so deny the living God of whom it bears witness. That idolatry is so fearful, and the numbers who are rushing into it so great and respectable, that I feel we ought to bear any reproaches and any suspicions rather than be the instruments of promoting it."—FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

### Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”

—*Carlyle.*

TIME, SWIFTNESS OF.—“That is an apt personification of Time which represents him as a decrepid old man, with wings that are visible only from behind. While we watch his approach, he seems to creep tardily along; it is not until he has passed us that we perceive he has been flying.”—*Henry Craik.*

THE WORLD’S HEROES.—“How often are the world’s especial heroes men who throw the mantle of vigorous intellect over the falseness, the heartlessness, the restlessness which especially characterise a vulgar mind. The calf to which the Israelites bowed down, was it not made of the trinkets of the common people?”—*Arthur Helps.*

THE RIGHT USE OF KNOWLEDGE.—“Knowledge is not a couch where-upon to rest a searching and restless spirit; or a terrace for a wandering and variable mind to walk up and down with a fair prospect; or a tower of state for a proud mind to raise itself upon; or a fort or commanding ground for strife and contention: or a shop for profit or sale,—but a *rich storehouse* for the glory of the Creator, and the relief of man’s estate.”—*Lord Bacon.*

MODERN INDIFFERENCE.—“Not many generations have elapsed since Englishmen were content to brave torture on the stake rather than subscribe to some abstruse formula about the mysteries of religion. . . . These men had the courage of their convictions, but it is vain to expect the courage of their convictions from men who have no deep and fixed convictions, such as sustained the martyrs of old.”—*H. L. Brodrick.*

THE DELIRIUM OF THE HEART.—“It is a mercy in affliction to be preserved from the delirium of the intellect; and is it not also a mercy to be kept from the delirium of the heart? Now, what ice is to the temples, cooling the blood, lowering the fever, and tranquillizing the mind, that is hope to the soul.”—*J. A. James.*

INTEMPERANCE.—“Drunkenness is a pleasant devil, a sweet poison, a pleasant sin, which whoever doth commit, committeth not a simple sin, but become *the centre and slave of all manner of sin.*”—*St. Augustine.*

GODLY HOPE AND FEAR.—“Fear (godly) and Hope in the soul of a Christian are like the cork and lead to the wet; the cork keeps it from sinking and the lead from too much floating; so it is here. Fear keeps Hope from degenerating into presumption, and Hope keeps Fear from degenerating into despair.”—*Bates.*

## Reviews.

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CREEDS OF THE DAY, OR COLLATED OPINIONS OF REPUTABLE THINKERS.  
By HENRY COKE. In Two Volumes. London: Trubner and Co.,  
Ludgate Hill.

This is a very remarkable work, remarkable for the ability of its author, and the purpose to which that ability is directed. We have here presented to us the theological outcome of Biblical literature, of modern science, and current philosophy; and the reasonings and conclusions of the most eminent modern scholars and scientists in relation to these subjects. The whole is treated of under two heads;—Revelation, meaning miraculous communications from God to man, and Rational Theology which includes Natural Theology, or the argument from design, and Metaphysical Theology, or the theory of being. These points are dealt with in three series of Letters. Those who desire to learn what a man of immense reading, vast intelligence, philosophic penetration, and unusual logical force, can propound contrary to the current orthodox opinions concerning the Bible (including the Old and New Testaments), and concerning the Being and Government of God, could not do better than study these two volumes. Perhaps there could be no better discipline for a Gospel preacher than such a study. It will rouse his faculties, lead him to an earnest re-investigation of his own opinions, blow away from his mind all dogmatism, and enable him to speak with such broad intelligence and rational force as will commend his ministrations to all thoughtful men. For many reasons the man who contradicts our pre-conceived and traditional opinions, does us a greater mental and moral service than he who is their echo and advocate. He whose faith cannot brave the whirlwind and the storm of hostile criticism is, it beseems us, of little worth. He whose belief is rooted in those principles of absolute truth which are the basis and the force of all true reasoning, stands on the rocks against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

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ST. PAUL'S USE OF THE TERMS FLESH AND SPIRIT. By WILLIAM P. DICKSON, D.D. Glasgow: James Macleshose and Sons, St. Vincent Street.

This volume contains, in a revised form, six Lectures, given last winter, upon the foundation of the late Mr. Baird, of Auchmedden and Cambusdoon, along with various additions necessary to complete the design of the course. "My aim," says the author, "has been not to treat the

subject from a doctrinal, or a speculative point of view, or yet from that of popular exposition, but to conduct a purely exegetical inquiry bearing on recent discussions."

Most truly does the learned author say that "no reader of the letters of St. Paul, can fail to mark as a striking feature the frequent recurrence of certain antithetic parallels on which the apostle delights to dwell. We are constantly meeting one or another of those great polar contrasts on which his thoughts turn—each of them in his hands so fraught with meaning that all his teaching might seem gathered up into it, or disposed around it. Law and Gospel, sin and grace, death and life, faith and works, Adam and Christ, the old man and the new,—such are some of his most important and far-reaching antinomies. But none comes before us more frequently, or tinges more deeply the whole current of his thought, than the contrast which we are now to consider, that of flesh and spirit. It holds a central place; and from whatever point of view we regard it in its bearing on the constitution of human nature, on the doctrine of sin, or on the genesis and growth of the new life in Christ, its importance can hardly be estimated." Most thoroughly, with a keen critical judgment and manifest honesty, does the author prosecute the enquiry as to the real meaning of *πνεῦμα* and *σάρξ* as used by Paul. He investigates every passage in which the words occur. Whilst this work will be of great interest to the philological controversialist, it is of vast practical importance to every honest Biblical student. This work is one of great intrinsic merit and practical importance. It throws light on many a dark passage. It is not an ephemeral production, but of permanent worth. It does a work for theological libraries which no other one volume (which we know of) can accomplish, and a work, too, of no secondary moment.

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CORNISH STORIES. By MARK GUY PEARSE. London: T. Woolmer, City Road.

This little volume contains stories calculated to charm the imagination, excite the humorous, and, withal, improve the heart. It has elements to awaken laughter and evoke tears. The man is highly gifted who has the power to convey to the human mind soul-quickenings and elevating truths in the creations of fancy. We have just perused a novel entitled, "*All sorts and conditions of Men*," by Mr. Walter Besant, which contains, we think, a greater power for good than all the debates in Parliament, or a thousand sermons of the "barrel organ" type. Blessed is the man who can speak to his fellows in parable. Such blessedness, however, can only belong to a few in every age.

SNOW DREAMS, OR FUNNY FANCIES FOR LITTLE FOLKS. By JESSIE M. SAXBY. Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter and Co.

This is a charming little volume for young folks. It contains tales, rhymes, and pictorial illustrations of considerable variety and merit. It is a beautiful little book to put into the hands of girls or boys.

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PILGRIM SORROW. A cycle of Tales. By CARMEN SYLVA, Queen of Roumania. Translated by Helen Zimmeren. London: Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Square.

What a lovely face this Queen has, judging from the portrait. What a lovely mind, too, judging from the character and spirit of this book. Her whole nature seems to be mellowed by sadness. The few brief stories here reveal in chaste fancy and poetic style the experiences of her own beautiful nature. The talented translator says, concerning the contents of this book, "Though slightly veiled, it is impossible to ignore that this is an autobiography, that the soul of the Queen is laid bare before us, and a fair and noble soul it is. Indeed those who are best acquainted with the details of her life can best see how exactly they have been reproduced. There is, to begin with, her undaunted courage and desire to know, her love of music, in which she attained a certain proficiency under the tuition of Madame Schumann and Rubenstein, but whose execution she has had to abandon owing to weakened health, though the listening to music remains to her a source of keen delight and enthusiasm."

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THE YOUTH'S BUSINESS GUIDE. By EXPERIENTIA. London: Wyman, Great Queen Street.

An extract from the preface will furnish our readers with a correct idea of the nature and aim of this book. "The design is somewhat different from that of preceding manuals, with an apparently similar object. Unlike them, it is intended for youths who purpose to devote themselves to craftsmanship as well as to clerkship. Hitherto what has been called a commercial career by the writers who have undertaken to address young people, has not contemplated artisanship at all. The word business is herein widened in its signification, and held to include whatever calling is selected—whether that of the office or the workshop. These pages make no pretension to literary polish, but only claim to present in direct and homely language the results of a diversified practical experience of men and things. The position adopted has been that of an ordinary sensible



parent or friend endeavouring to advise and influence judiciously a sensible youth. Mere sentimentality and 'goody-goody' have been avoided."

A most valuable manual this for the guidance of youths in the selection of a business.

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UNKNOWN TO HISTORY. A Story of the Captivity of Mary of Scotland.  
By CHARLOTTE YONGE. London: Macmillan and Co.

This is a story of a very noteworthy personage in the history of our country. It is founded on facts, and imagination has given them such shapes and colourings as will fascinate and charm. Although not a large volume, it contains forty-five short chapters, each one fraught with interest. "If circumstances," says the eminent authoress, "regarding the Queen's captivity and Babington's plot have been found to be omitted, as well as many interesting personages in the suite of the captive Queen, it must be remembered that the art of the story-teller makes it needful to curtail some of the incidents which would render the narrative too complicated to be interesting to those who wish more for a view of noted characters in remarkable situations, than for a minute and accurate sifting of facts and evidence."

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LECTURES ON THE EPHESIANS. By R. W. DALE, M.A., LL.D. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

The best preaching, if not the only true preaching, is the expository, the preaching which St. Chrysostom describes "as that in which God speaks much and man little." This volume consists of expositions, and is intended not for scholars but for the people. Though they have but little show of learning, they are learned inasmuch as they contain the results of scholarly investigation. The author is what is called a fluent man, fluent alike with tongue and pen, and this, in some cases, is a disadvantage to a teacher. England's Premier loses much of his power through it. His verbosity drowns his thoughts, and tires and bewilders his audience. The art of condensation is an art whose study becomes more and more urgent in this age of absorbing activities. The clearer a man's thought is to himself, the fewer words will he require to present it to others. No sermon will be tolerated soon that extends over twenty minutes: fifteen minutes is quite long enough. It is the condensed thought that creates thought; it is the compressed air that works machinery, the condensed sunbeam that creates conflagrations. Those who were privileged to listen to these admirable discourses will most appreciate them. Their thoughts will come up to their memories in the oratorical vocalisation and the living melodies which they listened to them in their own church

HAND-BOOK FOR BIBLE CLASSES. THE GOSPEL OF ST. MARK. By Dr. T. LINDSAY. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street.

In the preface the author says, "This commentary on the Gospel of St. Mark has been written with the view of supplying, as far as possible, the kind of information and notes required by the teacher of a Bible-Class, where the pupils have in their hands the author's little fourpenny commentary, published by Blackie and Sons. It does not pretend to be a critical exposition of the Gospel from a new or original point of view, and the author has made free use, always with due acknowledgment, of every available source of information. The introduction, analysis, and divisions have been made on the principle of looking at the Gospel of Mark as a life of Christ. Accordingly the introduction includes a short statement of the political and religious state of Palestine during our Lord's ministry, and the chronological summary in the appendix aims at giving that historical framework to the life of Christ, which many of those for whom this book is specially intended have desired."

We consider this one of the best of this admirable series of hand-books.

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ALL LOST IN THE SNOW. A Tale founded on fact. By Mrs. WILLIAM OLDING. London: Elliot Stock, 62, Paternoster Row.

A book of family life that has all the distinctive features of Mrs. Olding's other and successful productions,—an eye for all that is pathetic in mortal affairs, beautiful in natural scenery, and noble in human character. We shall not be surprised if it has as wide a circulation as some of its predecessors from the earnest authoress' agile pen.

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OBSCURER CHARACTERS AND MINOR LIGHTS OF SCRIPTURE. By Rev. F. HASTINGS. London: James Nisbet & Co.

The Holy Scriptures have given immortality of fame to many names, even as they have revealed immortality for all men. But amongst the Bible Heroes some names shine with richer lustre, and are thereby more conspicuous than others. This little book deals with those whose lustre is softer and whose renown, therefore, is less than that of many of their compeers. Albeit every such life has its own individual worth, and will well repay such study as the author of this carefully prepared volume has given to each and all of his subjects. Mr. Hastings has an artist's eye and a painter's hand, and these are just the gifts for such a task as this.

THE BOOK OF JOB. As expounded to his Cambridge Pupils. BY THE LATE HERMANN LUDWIG BERNARD, PH.D., M.A. Edited by FRANK CHANCE, B.A., M.B. London: Charles Higham, 27, Farringdon Street.

The author of this book was one of the most distinguished Hebrew scholars of the nineteenth century. He was, for twenty-seven years, Hebrew teacher in the University of Cambridge; and was the author of several other Hebrew works, such as a "Guide to the Hebrew Student," an "Easy and Practical Hebrew Grammar," &c., &c. This volume, besides the incomparable expositions of the author, contains an admirable introduction by *Judah Lev Ben-Zev*; also a lengthy and learned appendix. The whole is edited by his friend and former pupil, Frank Chance, M.B. The author of "*Problemata Mundi*" (a well-known work now we understand appearing in a third edition) has said that having consulted all the best ancient and modern commentaries on the Book of Job, in the course of his investigations on the subject, he considers that of Dr. Bernard stands alone in fundamental features of excellence. Every Biblical student, before drawing his conclusions from the Book of Job, should carefully peruse and study this incomparable work of Dr. Bernard's.

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A NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY. Edited by JAMES A. H. MURRAY, LL.D. Part I. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

The aim of this Dictionary is to furnish an adequate account of the meaning, origin, and history of English words now in general use, or known to have been in use at any time during the last seven hundred years. It endeavours (1) to show, with regard to each individual word, when, how, in what shape, and with what signification it became English: what development of form and meaning it has since received: which of its uses have, in the course of time, become obsolete, and which still survive: what new words have since arisen, by what processes, and when: (2) to illustrate these facts by a series of quotations ranging from the first known occurrence of the word to the latest, or down to the present day; the word being thus made to exhibit its own history and meaning; and (3) to treat the etymology of each word on the basis of historical fact, and in accordance with the methods and results of modern philological science." The talented, learned, and indefatigable editor has called into his high service many scores of the most distinguished philologists and scholars, both of ancient and modern times. When we look at the comprehensiveness of the plan of this work, which will comprise numerous large volumes, at the vast variety of the words that have never found their way into a lexicographical work before, with their lucid and

laconic definitions, at the attractiveness of the type, through its elegance and variety, we feel that this work when finished will be the greatest of its kind of any age or country. When our readers are informed that this first volume, composed of 362 large octavo pages, and very small type, only takes us to the syllable *Ant*, they may be able to calculate to some extent what the work will become when it has encompassed *Z*.

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THE POETS AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE. By OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, In two vols. Edinburgh : David Douglas, Castle Street.

Who, at all acquainted with modern literature, does not know the name of Oliver Wendell Holmes? And who, with any literary taste and capacity, regards him not as one of the masters of his craft? These two volumes form the first of a series of a complete pocket edition of the author's works, containing his latest additions and illustrative notes. The others will comprise "The Autocrat, The Professor, Mr. Howell's Stories, Venetian Life, and Italian Journeys." Mr. Holmes' productions are of course too well known to require any commendatory remarks. But we would strongly recommend its elegant little edition.

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WITHOUT GOD: NEGATIVE SCIENCE AND NATURAL ETHICS. By PERCY GREG. London : Hurst and Blackett, Great Marlborough Street.

This work is a brief and popular treatment of Darwinianism and orthodoxy. The author says, "I am sure it is possible to accept by far the larger and fuller part of the recent conclusions of science without losing faith either in Providence or Creation. Nay, while finding in evolution itself the most striking evidence of creative power and wisdom." We suppose that most enlightened and honest students of the Bible will agree in this. The discussion in this book is constructed on the Socratic method, a method which has many manifest advantages. It invests the composition with a dramatic interest, and allows the author to declare his own convictions, even although they be the wildest of the wild, under the protection of personal irresponsibility. The volume comprises subjects under the following titles: "The Cynic Cosmogony, New Lamps for Old, Chance or Creation, The Pardon of Positivism, Morals of Probability, Women's Future, Without Faith, Despair, Inverted Moral Aspects, The Invented Deity, By their Fruits, Their Ice and Snow Bridges, *Caeterum Censeo*." What the "*Spectator*" said of the author's work, entitled "The Devil's Advocate," is true of this: "It is full of thought, and of thought that goes to the very kernel of the subjects discussed."



THE ENGLISH VILLAGE COMMUNITY. An Essay in Economic History.  
By FREDERIC SEEBOHM. Second Edition. London: Longmans  
and Green.

This book treats of the Village Community in relation to the manorial and tribal system, and to the common or open field system of husbandry. The following extract from the author's preface will indicate the nature and political importance of the work. "When I had the honour to lay the two papers, which have expanded into this volume, before the Society of Antiquaries, it was with a confession and an apology, which in publishing and dedicating to them this essay I now repeat. I confessed to having approached the subject not as an antiquary, but as a student of economic history, and even with a directly political interest. To learn the meaning of the old order of things, with its community and equality as a key to a right understanding of the new order of things, with its contrasting individual independence and inequality, this was the object which, in the first instance, tempted me to poach upon antiquarian manors, and it must be my apology for treating, from an economic point of view, a subject which has also an antiquarian interest. To statesmen, whether of England, or of the new Englands across the oceans, the importance can hardly be over estimated of a sound appreciation of the nature of that remarkable economic evolution, in the course of which the great English-speaking nations have, so to speak, become charged in our time with the trial of the experiment—let us hope also with the solution of the problem—of freedom and democracy, using the words in the highest political sense as the antipodes of paternal government and communism." The author of this work is very learned in his subject. He touches points with which we have but little acquaintance. We have no doubt, however, of their importance to those who have undertaken the work of dealing with the land laws of England.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRISTIANITY. By STANLEY LEATHES, D.D.  
London: Nisbet and Co., 21, Berners Street.

Little need be said of this work. Dr. Leathes is well known and highly appreciated as a theological teacher. This volume treats of the following subjects:—"Christianity the Subject of Preparation; Christianity the Product of Historical Forces; Christianity a Book Religion; Christianity Identified with a Person; Christianity Preserved by a Spirit; Christianity the Hope and Refuge of Mankind." To the work is added several pages of most valuable notes and illustrations. Altogether this is a very valuable contribution to theological literature.





The  
*Leading Homily.*


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OF NARROWNESS.

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"AND JOHN ANSWERED AND SAID, MASTER, WE SAW ONE CASTING OUT DEVILS IN THY NAME; AND WE FORBADE HIM, BECAUSE HE FOLLOWETH NOT WITH US. AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, FORBID HIM NOT: FOR HE THAT IS NOT AGAINST US IS FOR US."—*A.V.* (*R.V.*—"HE THAT . . . *YOU* IS FOR *YOU*.)—*St. Luke ix. 49, 50.*

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HE subject assigned to me is "narrowness," and the text allotted to me is that which I have read to you. I put aside, therefore, the question of demons and the exorcism of them, which here, and in other places in the evangelical story, excites our attention and startles us into awe, and makes us feel how many more things there are in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy; and come at once to the subject of that failure of God's servants which, from the beginning until to-day, has hampered their work and hindered their co-operation, and which in bad times has been received into men's bosoms as if it were a Christian grace,—the cramped contractedness of soul which we call "narrowness." I have spoken of the false garb in which "narrowness" appears in bad times. It is always "bad times" somewhere. Narrowness is always with us, but the danger is least when "narrowness" is recognised in its own form and seen to be "narrowness."

What is narrowness? Narrowness is a metaphor of dimension, but it requires qualification. There are men of wide knowledge who are narrow-minded, there are men of slender knowledge who are wide-minded. There are men of eminent capacity who are narrow-minded men, and men of small capacity who are large-minded men.

There are men who look larger than they ought to look, there are men who some day will look larger than they do now. Of the first, Lord Bacon says: "Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves?" To such men the day of judgment comes, here or hereafter, and in its searching fires the wood and hay and stubble of a life-time are consumed. Into that fire there goes apparently a large man; out of it there may emerge a shrunken remnant of a man, saved so as by fire.

On the other hand, who does not feel the power and the beauty of the lines in which the poet Gray describes those who were accidentally small, but who hereafter will expand to the fullest dimensions of which their gifts were capable.

"Perhaps," he says, as his eye falls on the modest graves of the poor:—

"Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,  
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:  
But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll,  
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul."

To such men the day of judgment, sometimes here, always hereafter, is a great day of expansion and growth. The ruler of few things is made ruler over many things; the man grows out and grows up to himself.

Narrowness in good men arises from a want of balance. The conscience may produce it; the intellect may produce it; the will

may produce it.\* Conscience starved of knowledge produces a narrow fanatic. The intellect starved of experience produces a narrow dogmatist. The will starved of charity produces a narrow tyrant.

It is in the Bible that we find the highest examples of each variety of this failure, and there, too, we find the most perfect correction of them all. The ways of men are narrow, but the grace of Christ is wide. Let me point out, from the Old Testament, some of the checks upon "narrowness," before I come to the special instance of it contained in my text. Take the instance in the book of Numbers, which is the companion picture to the scene in the text. The people are murmuring, the manna has ceased to please them, they crave for meat, meat. They stand, each man at his tent door, crying for meat, and all their murmurings are directed so as to reach the ears and press upon the spirit of their great leader. Seventy men are selected to share the burden of their murmuring and the responsibility of their guidance with Moses. All but two obey at once and go to the Tabernacle. Two remain in the camp. I cannot but think that there was some reluctance, or some cowardice, or some half-disobedience in their hearts that they did not go. But this is not suffered to hinder the action of God's free spirit. The sixty-eight "prophesy" at the Tabernacle, the two defaulters come under the same influence and "prophesy" in the camp. A swift tell-tale runs to inform Moses of the irregularity, and Joshua, jealous for Moses, appeals to the great lawgiver to forbid them. Let them join the regularly constituted body, or be silent, was the choice then, as so often since, offered to the irregulars. "Enviest thou for my sake?" was the noble answer. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!" Now more than three thousand years have passed since that circumstance took place, but no lapse of time affects the power of it, nor deprives it of the charm and charity that brighten the breadth of it. It remains the great divinely providential protest, under the law, against narrowness, in that aspect of narrowness which is the besetment of good men

\* See Sermon on *Christian and Social Tolerance*, by the Rev. John Ker. P. 198.

whose calling is regular, whose position is unchallengeable, but whose view is narrowed by considerations that have more to do with means than with ends.

But let me pass from the law to the prophets, and from the narrowness that is what we call ministerial and official, to the narrowness, more injurious still, which limits the application of the grace of God and mis-interprets that name of God—El Shaddai, God All Bountiful.

Let me pass from Joshua to Jonah. Jonah lived in Israel in the eighth century before our Lord. He was the leading man of his time. He lived, as it were, "in the presence of the Lord." The hearts of pious Israelites leaned upon him. The prophets of the Jews were statesmen almost as often as not, and it was often their trial that they were so. The political peril of Jonah's time was Nineveh. It was to Israel what a few years ago Germany was to Denmark, or France to Belgium. It was to the ten tribes especially a source of constant solicitude, and at last, as we know, the Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold. Now to these natural enemies of his countrymen, Jonah is commissioned to preach. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it." Jonah is shocked at the commission; he is not afraid of the journey; he is unwilling to be the agent of rebuke and repentance to his natural enemies. He will travel farther west by sea, to avoid God's work, than he was bidden travel east by land to fulfil it. He foresees that the Ninevites will repent; or it may be only this, that perhaps they will, and that if they do, God will repent of the evil that He threatens and not do it to them, and then—what then; that he does not like to think of. Hundreds of years afterwards, his fellow-countrymen, listening in "a great silence" to the account one of them—a greater man in his day than Jonah was in his—was giving them, on the stairs of Antonia, of a vision he had seen in the very Temple on the edge of which they were then standing, gave him audience in the hush of a mighty self-suppression, till he proclaimed his commission to go far thence to the Gentiles. Then the narrowness that would not widen to admit love, large-hearted love, gave way under the tremendous violence of hate;

they were consumed in the furnace of their own implacability. No wonder that Jonah shrank back from a work his people were not ready to do eight hundred years afterwards. We have the measure of the man in his book. He tells his own story without extenuating anything. He lets us see how much too good he thought God was, how much too wide for him. And yet the narrowness that presses upon him and straitens him is felt by him as a fault. He draws the picture to his own disadvantage. Dr. Pusey, whose commentary on this book it would be presumptuous in me to praise, says, "The righteous judgment of God stands out the more, alike in the history of the mariners and of the Ninevites, in that the character of both is exhibited advantageously in comparison with that of the prophet. The prophet brings out the awe, the humanity, the earnestness of the natural religion, and the final conversion of the sailors, and the zealous repentance of the Ninevites, while he neglects to explain his own character, or to soften its hard angles. He cares only to teach us what God taught him for us. The last are first, the first are last. The mariners were spared, the Hebrew prophet was cast forth as guilty. The Ninevites were forgiven, the prophet rebuked." The whole narrative remains as the protest of the Holy Spirit, under the prophetic dispensation, against the narrowness that measures the purposes of God by the prejudices of men, and shrinks back alarmed, and even angry, whenever the Almighty goes forth upon ways that are not yet our ways, and interprets in larger language than we are used to the thoughts that, in their wider sense, are not yet our thoughts.

The words of Moses are a protest against the narrowness that excludes the co-operation of men not under our own obedience. The book of Jonah is a protest against the narrowness that insists upon limiting God's benevolent mercy to those objects and purposes and peoples, aye, and persons too, to whom we are willing to extend it.

Now comes the scene in the text, repeating and combining the narrowness of the law and the prophets, almost under the eyes, almost in the presence of the Son of Man. What an honest book the Bible is! Prophets, evangelists, apostles are willing to



illustrate, by their own failings, the love they cannot comprehend. And yet, and here our comfort lies, we see them grow and widen and enlarge, as line upon line our Lord instructs them, and precept by precept lifts them up to loftier views and wider horizons.

“John *answered* and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.” There is deep interest in the word, “*answered*.” It is the revelation to us of a good man’s heart in the very process of enlargement. St. John had, in the way from the Mount of Transfiguration to Capernaum, together with some others of the disciples, seen one casting out devils in Christ’s name. St. John had been on the “holy mount” and seen unspeakable things. He had come down with higher ambitions and, under the circumstances, sorrowful ambitions. Who should be greatest when the glory of that transfiguration should be revealed again, never to fade away. There was then, as so often since, a dispute who should be greatest. And our Lord, who knew what they had been saying, as He knows now what we say in newspapers and platforms and pulpits, “took a child and set him by Him, and said, Whosoever shall receive this child in My name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” The apostle’s heart smote him, as often ours must smite us. What had he just been doing, for disputing was only half of his mistake. He had been forbidding a man from casting out devils in Christ’s name, for the insufficient reason, not that the man undervalued Christ, for he was working in Christ’s name, but that he undervalued, or seemed to undervalue, the fellowship of the disciples. “He followeth not with us.” Our Lord’s reproof was gentle, as successful reproof always is. He knew that His words, about receiving a little child in His name, had revived the memory and quickened the conscience of His apostle who had rejected a man who cast out devils in His name. So His words that follow are words of instruction for all time; He lays down a principle that shall apply when He Himself is no longer with them. But before He does so, or rather while He

does so, He separates between Himself and them. Very full of admonition, to the last degree of solemnity, is the separation He makes between Himself and them. St. John had forbidden a man to do Christ's work, "because he followeth not with us." He evidently included in that "us" his Master. He thought himself to be vindicating his Master's honour when he was hindering his Master's work. Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil; to cast out devils, yea, even to wish to cast them out, in the name of Christ, is to share in the work of Christ. The man in question was at least attempting to work for Christ. Mark every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the Lord. Join together St. Mark's account (Mark ix. 38) with St. Luke's account, and let me read them in the Revised Version. "But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against you is for you." When it is a question of our own life, our Lord includes us with Himself. He is the vine, we the branches; He the head, we the members. Because He lives we shall live also. But when it is a question of His purposes and His kingdom, He will not allow us to identify our thoughts with His thoughts; "you," He says then, not "us." "He that is not against you is for you." More good goes on than we can see; more agencies of beneficence are busy and are blessed than come within our ken. Christ has now, as He had then, some whom His disciples do not know, and, perhaps, would hinder if they knew them. Virtue has gone out of Him, and "mighty works" are done in His name by those who take their own counsel and follow their own methods, but whom He knows to be doing what they do in His name. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold," may be written with advantage over the porch of every denomination of Christians known to men.

The worst narrowness is selfishness, self-love, self-will, self-interest. We can love Christ selfishly, and whole books that wear the semblance of devotion are but subtle ministries to religious selfishness. We can love our Church selfishly, and grudge to see the work of others prosper. If we do, we must suffer, we shall grow lean of soul. Can we not love our Church

and seek her prosperity, and come to her "communion feast," and tell the long bede-roll of her saints, and do her work, and go in and out and find pasture in her refreshing services, without walking in un-wisdom towards our fellow Christians who follow not with us? We can, and more and more we will try to do so. Even then we shall not have overcome all our narrowness. We are "narrow" amongst ourselves. We are often scrupulous when there is no need; we often abridge one another's liberty. The clergy often forget that "minister" means servant; the people often forget that he is Christ's servant as well as theirs. We often unduly press or unduly resist things indifferent, which we should not do if we were more under the widening influence of love. We can love Christ's work selfishly, and grow narrower while we do it. We cannot take part in every work for Christ, but we need not be indifferent to the work that others do. Division of labour has for its complement distribution of sympathy and fellowship through prayer. Selfishness in some form lies behind all narrowness, and the Spirit of Christ is the only cure. St. Paul is the great warning of how narrow a powerful mind can be, and the blessed example of how wide it may become. He, indeed, had not to modify, but to reverse his ways, his thoughts, his sympathies. From seeking the lives of the disciples of Christ, he came to be willing for their sakes, for Christ's sake, to lay down his own. He broke through the million-meshed web of Pharisaical restrictions, and cast away its cords. He climbed the hill of God to its highest peak, and breathed its serenest air. Higher yet his life was lifted. How, he cannot tell us; nor even whether in the body or out of the body. Like his fellow apostle, St. John, who shared with him these unearthly experiences, he had to "seal up" what he heard, for it was "not lawful for a man to utter" it. But just as one who has travelled in foreign lands and learned their speech, betrays on his return the secret of his sojourn there, by some unusual expression, or some strange turn of language that mingles with his mother tongue, so do these apostles, and especially St. Paul, prove to us the reality of their heavenly experiences by the words of a larger dialect than ours, that all unconsciously they constantly let fall. Especially is this

so with the words that deal with space and time. The canons of earthly measurement are broken in their hands; the cubits of men lose their geometrical significance and become "heavenly things." In attempting to describe the extent to which the cross of Christ lends virtue to the love of Christ, St. Paul almost loses the power of articulate speech; and, as if he were for a moment suffered again to see the visions and revelations that he was not permitted to interpret, he bows his knees, enters into the glory of God, and from out the luminous cloud that comes down upon him, we hear words that we know used in meanings we do not know,—“breadth,” “length,” “height,” “depth,” “to know.” The narrowness must, indeed, be inveterate that survives the power of this Divine charm.

But it may be asked, have we no rules at all to offer, no limits to prescribe. We are timid, fearful to go too far, anxious, deeply anxious not to go out into the wilderness, nor to walk on the world's enchanted ground. We want to know the limits of the sound and the lawful, where to bind and where to loose, where to encourage and where to forbid. I know only one rule,—communion with Christ, in the widest and deepest sense the word will bear. His wisdom is equal to our wants, be they what they may; and His wisdom, we are taught in one of the most beautiful words in the Bible,\* when it enters our storm-swept atmosphere, illuminates with its rainbow radiance the widest expanse of our humanity, and in that light we see light. Once only does St. Paul give us what may be called the charter of Christian free thought. He surveys the whole field of human life,—the world around us, the world within us, the world above us, and then, with a rapid recognition that beauty and holiness are the two centres round which all things that Christians care for ought to group themselves, he gives the large-hearted, large-minded direction,—“Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Then, assuring his beloved Philippians that it

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\* Ephesians iii. 10. *Polyptoikilos*.



was his own rule to do so and that he had found it good, he adds, that "the God of peace" would sanction it.

One closing word:—before we hinder anybody from casting out devils,—let us redouble our efforts to cast them out ourselves. Narrowness is itself a devil, and does the devil's work. Like the giant that Bunyan saw, it is not now what it was. Its power is weakened, but its spirit is unchanged. Ofttimes has it cast men into the fire and into the water, and oftener still has embittered lives it was powerless to destroy. It is perpetually at work to erect prejudices into principles, to make agreement in opinions take the place of a common life in our one and only Saviour. Why can we not cast it out. The answer to this question is found in the scanty measure of our communion, our fellowship with our Master. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer." Let us pray.

HIGH BRAY RECTORY.

W. J. EDMONDS.



#### FRAGRANCE.

"NEITHER the eye nor the ear is exclusively fitted to promote spiritual thoughts. Every means that can rouse our emotional as well as our intellectual nature—for religion appeals to both and comprehends both within its sphere—is of great value, and was given for that very purpose. Constituted as we are we cannot afford to lose even the least of the helps to devotional feeling which have been given to us so abundantly in the use of our external senses and in the objects and symbols of nature. But here a word of caution is necessary. We must remember that although the fragrance of nature is an æsthetical perception, it is not necessarily a religious feeling. It excites pleasurable sensations, but not pious emotions in the unsanctified heart."—HUGH MACMILLAN, LL.D.



## Germs of Thought.

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### God in Nature ; or, Spring Lessons.

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‘AND GOD SAW EVERY THING THAT HE HAD MADE, AND, BEHOLD,  
IT WAS VERY GOOD.’—*Gen. i. 31.*

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To study the material world carefully is at once a stern necessity and a pleasing duty and privilege. It is a *necessity*, for how dependent upon such a course are we for life's comforts, pleasures, and business ! How great is our debt to science ? But it is also a *duty* and *privilege*. The pious and thoughtful in all ages have so believed. Creation is studied by the spiritually-minded not only as the *work*, but also as the *revelation* and *minister* of God. All who consider “the works of the Lord, and the operations of His hands” can enter into the words of the devoted Henry Martyn,—“The least of God's works is refreshing to look at: a dried leaf, or a straw, makes me feel in good company.” There is no danger that God's recorded revelation will lose any of its just value and importance if we do often bend our thoughts to the study of that older revelation He has made in His works. There need not be—there will not be—any contradiction between nature and revelation. Traditions, human theories, “dreams and words,” may be changed, modified, or passed away, but the truth of God, wherever written, will remain. “True science will not contradict true religion,” as Huxley bears witness; or, as Coleridge, in his *Lay Sermons*, said, “What is *expressed* in the inspired writings is *implied* in all absolute science.”\* Every Christian will willingly study the works of creation, not merely

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\* Herbert Spencer says “Doubtless science is antagonistic to the superstitions that pass under the name of religion, but not to the essential religion which these superstitions merely hide. Doubtless, too, in much of the science that is current, there is a pervading spirit of irreligion, but not in the true science which has passed beyond the superficial into the profound.”

for the advantages thence resulting, but as the highest act of worship and proof of love. Is not such the offering of *deeds* and *sacrifices* of time, &c. In a well-known passage Herbert Spencer compares those who praise the works of nature and yet never study them to those who should daily praise a writer in superlative language but never read the contents of his works or try to understand them. Let us, then, try to read again the attractive page written by the "Hand of God" at this season of the year. It is difficult to bring forth fresh thoughts upon the subject, for has not every poet and moralist dwelt lovingly upon "sweet spring-time"? Perhaps the old truths may get deeper fixed in our hearts and mind, and form "a perpetual paradise of fancy" when the season itself has passed away. Gather then the truths concerning *God*, *human life*, and *human destiny* now taught.

I.—GLIMPSES OF THE DIVINE NATURE. (a) *The ceaseless and infinite energy of God.* Of course this truth is not confined to any one spot or season. Every branch of science will supply illustrations of this truth. The *heavens* "present to us a scene of tremendous, nay, of inconceivable energy" (cf. Proctor's *Mysteries of Time and Space*). The *earth* in its gradual formation, &c. (cf. Geographical Evolution, in Geikie's *Geological Sketches*). But this fact is more apparent even to the most careless and unscientific mind at this season. It is brought nearer to us; more within our grasp, &c. What lavish profusion of gifts and life every moment and everywhere! *Life* is now seen everywhere highly stimulated. In *planning*, *performing*, and *preserving* what omnipotent energy! "Mercies ever new," &c. "The everlasting God neither faineth," &c. (b) *The blessedness and beauty of God.* Nature is now full of joy and beauty. Happiness is the rule. Not a single object but plainly conveys ideas of beauty. "Very good" is still the voice of God. God is the Infinitely Happy Being. He delights in His works. "The Lord shall *rejoice* in His works." If God has created these unnumbered objects of beauty, what, then, must He be? Pre-eminently "the Beautiful," as Plato, long ago, declared. The ancient Greeks saw this truth, for their name for the world was

"Beauty." Such blessedness and beauty, then, are only the symbols of what God desires and plans should be ours, morally and spiritually.

II.—LESSONS CONCERNING HUMAN LIFE. It is an old, but true comparison of this life to the seasons of the year. Spring has always suggested the *refreshing, promising, transient, and changeable* nature of life's early days. But notice, especially, the *improveability* of life. Spring, the cultivating season. Efforts are put forth with the special view of future advantage. All life can be improved. Every gift, talent, grace can be cultivated. Culture, the law of nature and God. Spiritual life is a growth. How *conditional* is the law of cultivation in nature. Neglect the spring, and then the autumn shows only barren fields. How *precarious*. Buds, &c., may be blighted. Need for watching, &c. Out of the lavish store of seeds planted how few may spring forth. We know not at what juncture we co-operate with God for the successful harvest. Ceaseless assiduity needful. Precisely so is it in mental and spiritual life. All is conditional and precarious. It is true, in an almost overwhelming sense, what Schiller, in his Drama of Wallenstein, says—

"The moment comes.

It is already here, when thou must write  
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum."

III.—SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING HUMAN DESTINY. It is only by an accommodation of language that we can speak of winter as desolate and lifeless. Spring is the season when life revives. "All things become new." To be "young again" has been the dream of all ages. It is the underlying truth of many sweet legends. But the distinct proof of immortal youth beyond the grave alone is given by Christ. "The first begotten of the dead," &c. But this season gives many tender and beautiful suggestions. Is it incredible that life, and not death, should bethe end of all? Shall there be such processes, &c., to produce and preserve the lower stages of life, and a break-down when we come to man? (Cf. "The New Creed" in "Songs Unsung," by L. Morris, and also "In Memoriam," Cantos liv. and lv.) In a recent work upon

"Evolution and Natural Theology," by Kirby, we read: "Death and destruction have no real existence, being always the Divinely appointed precursors of higher life and development." We believe the words are applicable to what we term the death of man. We shall die to "live again," and in a higher form. We accept the truths suggested by the resurrection of nature. Death is not the last thing, but life. We adore the God of nature; we submit to life's discipline; we wait the dawning of the eternal spring beyond the "chances and changes of this world."

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### The Risen Jesus Known.

"HOW HE WAS KNOWN OF THEM."—*Luke* xxiv. 35.

No ingenuity can discover the reasons for our Lord's appearances after His resurrection. He appeared at times, places, and to persons, when, and where, and by whom He was least expected. The meetings were not accidental. To ascribe them to chance is simply another way of saying that we cannot find a reason; for the word "chance" is a word which only covers our ignorance. It explains nothing. We believe that the times, places, and persons were chosen for some beneficent purpose, but what that purpose actually was we cannot even guess. Before His resurrection, His movements might, to a certain extent, be calculated, a probable reason might be found for the selection of certain places and persons for special teaching and work; but after the resurrection conjecture is much more difficult. He came and went we know not how, and we know not why. The circumstances were never such as we would have anticipated; the persons hardly those we would have selected. The "journey to Emmaus" is an illustration. Neither the place, the persons, nor

the manner is such as we should have expected. We should have selected persons of more importance than two unknown disciples, and circumstances of more display, a place more dignified than a dusty road, and a manner somewhat different from that of a wayfaring man. The manner seems to have been quite unexpected, even by the disciples themselves; its simplicity and naturalness seem to have knocked them off their guard, so that they never, even for a moment, suspected that the stranger was the Lord.

The question we wish to consider, however, is not "Why did He appear thus?" but "How was He known of them?" How came these disciples to know that the stranger was the Saviour?

The question is not without practical importance. The Divine ways are always unobtrusive, and it may be that Jesus has been—is now, perhaps—journeying with us, as truly as with these two disciples to Emmaus, unknown to us just as He was unknown to them. If we are able to discover "how He was known of them," it may help us to discover how He may be known by us. We are told that "He was known of them in *breaking of bread*." But how were they able by this simple act to recognise Him? The recognition was evidently the result of what had preceded. They were changed, although, perhaps, they were not conscious of it. Their spiritual insight had been deepened, they had been secretly prepared by His dealings with them, to recognise Him in the common meal. When they returned to Jerusalem, "they told what things were done in the way," and the "things done in the way" seem to have prepared them to see Jesus in the common act of breaking bread.

I.—NOW WHAT WERE THE "THINGS DONE IN THE WAY"?

1.—*They conversed*. What is recorded is evidently only the briefest outline of what passed. It is clear that Jesus and the two disciples conversed a good deal together. He asked them about their sadness, and they told Him all that had happened in Jerusalem concerning Jesus of Nazareth. The conversation was, in many ways, an exceptional one. It must have had its due effect upon the disciples, silently preparing them to recognise both the object of the teaching and the character of the Teacher.



It was thus a means to an end, a preparation for a higher spiritual revelation. And this should be the object of all religious teaching.

Now we cannot converse with Jesus in exactly the same way as these two disciples did ; we see Him no more as they saw Him. His visible presence, as it was with them, is with us no longer. But may conversation about Him, and "the things which happened in Jerusalem concerning Him," not lead us, just as it led them, to understand "these things" a little better—may it not lead us to that deeper spiritual insight which they reached—that "burning of heart" out of which the recognition of our Divine Lord comes ?

Are you sad—any of you—about these things which happened in Jerusalem so long ago ? As you press onward in the way of life, does the thought of them depress you, make you sad, restless, instead of restful ? All round about you you hear of them—at the street corner, in the church, even in the market-place. For Christianity touches everything. Men cannot help talking of Jesus, and Him crucified. They cannot leave Him alone. As you bend over your ledger, thinking more of your gains than of your God, stray thoughts of "these things" may steal in upon you. A boy whistles, or a beggar sings before your window the refrain of a well-known hymn, and memories intimately connected with the name of Jesus—with "the things which happened in Jerusalem"—are stirred within you. But they bring to you no gladness, only a depressing sadness ; discomfort, not peace. And why ? You have false ideas of Him, and so you have false ideas of them. It was so with these disciples. They "trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." They had formed a false conception of their Lord—even though they loved Him—took the conception of the Jewish schools as their own, and so misunderstood the crucifixion and the death. But Jesus met them, conversed with them, removed their difficulties, and, by His teaching, dislodged the Jewish, and implanted in them the Christian idea, and so made the report of them who had been early at the sepulchre, which at first astonished them, intelligible and possible.

Have you any difficulty about "these things" ? Are the

crucifixion, and the death, and the resurrection, "things" only which puzzle you—which make His life more difficult to understand? You admire His life—have great hopes of His teaching—but as for the death and resurrection, you would rather push them aside as subjects difficult to harmonise with the speculations of the schools. They seem the defeat rather than the victory of Jesus. They give you trouble, not rest; awaken doubt, not hope.

Here is one way in which your view of "these things" may be changed. Converse with the Lord about them. But where is He? He is gone; we see Him no more. The disciples thought so too. They never thought that He was so near them as He was; they took Him for "a stranger in Jerusalem." And what is suggested by this fact but this, that the person nearest to us, whom, in God's providence, we met "in the way," and who has gone in to tarry with us, may be God's messenger, sent by Him to make "these things" clear? For Jesus comes to us in His people still. Let us speak with them of "the things concerning Jesus." Converse, not discuss. In discussion we take sides too readily, try to vindicate opinions, become too much the special pleader; but "talking together" we unfold spiritual experiences, receive impressions, and fuller light. And who knows but that Jesus Himself may draw near as we commune together, and by His teaching and His presence lead us to a deeper knowledge of His truth, of Himself, and of His death. We may not know it now, just as the disciples did not know it, but at night-fall, when "it is toward evening and the day is far spent," and we stand almost at the end of the journey, we may see then what we do not see now, that Jesus—our risen Lord—has been leading and teaching us all along the weary way. What is dark now will be clear then. The night will close in upon us in a blessed hope.

2. *The Scriptures were expounded unto them.* He inquired about their sadness, their finding how much their false views had darkened the meaning of the crucifixion for them. "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Our Lord did what many of us do not think we require to do—He took the disciples to the Scriptures. They

had been occupied with their own and fashionable notions about Him, He led them to God's. Now this is just what is often needed. We require to get rid of our own ideas gathered from books and schools, and, fashionable though they be in high places, come back to the Scripture testimony concerning Him, to what He really was, and to what He actually did. The Bible is a history as well as a revelation. It reveals God's purpose, and it also is a record of what actually took place. An imaginary Christ—a poetic dream—is apt to take the place in our thought of the Christ of history. The Scriptures testify of Him; make known what He came to do, and what He actually was. We have in them the Divine intention and the historical fact. The one supplements the other. We cannot understand Him without them.

There are two dangers.

Many of us form our conception of Jesus from Reviews, or Creeds, or Catechisms, and not from the Bible. And so we cannot, perhaps, understand His death or His resurrection. The cure in such cases is to be brought back to the Bible.

A student, wishing to buy a good standard theological work, consulted his professor. "What is the best book on theology you would advise me to get?" asked the young man. "A Bible," was the reply.

Bible study is the need of the present day. Our Bibles are unread. There is not a whit less interest in religion—in Jesus, and Him crucified—only we are apt to go to the wrong place to learn of Him. We read the "monthlies," not the Bible. We know what *they* say about Him; we are not quite so sure of what *it* says about Him. This is the error, and so we do not know Him as He may be known, nor understand Him as He may be understood, and thus we lose the knowledge of His presence.

Or, if we turn to the Bible, we take only parts of it, pick out favourite passages which endorse preconceived ideas, or suit our taste. This is an error which will not help us to a correct knowledge of the Lord. Our view will be incomplete, one-sided. Jesus "expounded unto them in *all* the Scriptures." Not one

passage; all. This is what we have to do, if we would learn of Him, we have to "search the Scriptures." The task is not a light one. It is a life's work. Do not think that you know the Bible so as to cease to study it. You never will know it, on this side of the grave at least, as it may be known. Some who think they know it best, know it least. It is inexhaustible; you read it to-day, a passage here, and, perhaps, another there, and you cannot understand them, all is dark. You read it to-morrow, and lo! a new heaven and a new earth are revealed to you. And so it changes. Ever giving us something new, as the spiritual life within us deepens; ever lighting up the journey with gleamings of celestial promise, and kindling within us a passionate love for Him who is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of it all.

Go to the Bible for theology. Get what help you can from wise teachers, from honest friends, from useful books, but ever turn, again and again, to its sacred page. It will make many of "the things which have come to pass" clear, and make our Lord better known to you.

II.—WHAT WAS THE RESULT? "He was known of them *in breaking of bread*." That is to say, they discerned Christ in the common meal, through the teaching. Let us trace the stages of this spiritual discernment. First there is the kindling of spiritual sympathy,—*"our hearts burn within us"*; then to the prepared hearts there was Divine suggestiveness in the common things of life. It is always the same. First comes the inner spiritual change, brought about in this case by conversation, by the exposition of the Scriptures, by intercourse and fellowship with the Lord; then follows the change in the outward aspect of things. We see the Lord then in many things, discern His presence where we never thought it was. These two conditions are intimately connected. The world is dark when there is no light within us. When the spiritual eye is dim, we can see no Divine purpose in common tasks and ordinary things. But when the Divine teaching has done its work, and by the *"burnings within us"* brought back our spiritual vision, then we are led to see Jesus, our Divine Teacher, even in the breaking of bread,—to see the

Divine Presence in common things. We may know Christ in many ways without this inner spiritual change, we may have wonderful theories of God and of the universe, but without this change we shall never understand His death and resurrection as they may be understood, nor shall we know of His presence with us as it may be known and seen almost in everything. This is one of the blessings of conversion. Ordinary things become Divine instructors then; all life is filled with lessons for the Christian child. Where the ordinary eyes will see nothing but the operations of nature, of changeful matter, the spiritual eye will see the beneficence and goodness of God. In little things, as well as in great, it will be so; on lowly bank and mouldering stone, as well as in the uplifting of the pillars of heaven and the settling of the foundations of the earth. We do not know how blind we are until this inner change takes place. To prepared hearts there is a suggestiveness of God in everything. The fields lying bleak and barren under the winter's cold, the mountains sculptured by the heats and colds of the changing years, the birds which strike their notes against the mountain's sides and fill the valleys with their echoes, the sky studded with the light and glories of untrodden worlds, the earth, the sea, the sky, the casting of the clay and the scattering of the cloud, the mouldering of the dust and the kindling of the morning star, have each and all some lesson for the Christian child. Earth then teaches us of heaven. This is no dream. Had Christ Himself some revelation to make, some lesson to give of heavenly things, some truth to tell about Himself or God, He took some common thing of nature and made it speak of things Divine. Read His parables and see.

To prepared and changed hearts, life will have another tale to tell than what it has. It will lead us up to God. And this preparedness comes by the teaching and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, using, it may be, conversation and exposition as its instruments.

DUNDEE.

JONATHAN ROEBUCK.



### The Hidden Life.

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“YOUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD.”—*Colossians* iii. 3.

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THIS is an utterance that the unregenerate mind would not readily understand; nay, more, the ordinary Christian has to think a little and prepare his mind before he sees the true thought of the text. We need, what all Christians have more or less, a Pauline training to understand it. And yet St. Paul gives these words as the explanation of something which would seem to us, possibly, far simpler. To him, the deep things of God had become the simplest and the surest. So it was to those he taught: so it might be with us. And here, possibly, this thought may be a historical help. St. Paul never was at Colosse; at least we have no evidence of the fact. But it would seem clear that the Christians at Colosse had been taught by disciples of Paul. Otherwise, the Paul that made the speech to the Athenians would never have written this deeply spiritual letter to the Colossians.

The apostle himself suggests two ways in which we are to understand his words. I shall refer to those two, and then venture to suggest another two thoughts, to which the apostle has not referred, because his argument did not require them.

“Your life is hid with Christ in God.”

I.—Because YOUR TREASURE IS NOT ON THIS EARTH. All who have laid up their treasure in heaven have their life thus hidden. A man who loses his chances of success through sacrificing himself to home and spiritual duties; the life of that man is hid with Christ in God. A man who gives away his money unostentatiously; a woman who refuses a wealthy but worldly marriage, have both hid their life with Christ. All who have loved ones departed, feel that their life is, to some extent, hid with God. Oh, that they may be able to say it is hid with *Christ* in God.

II.—Because YE ARE DEAD. Ye are dead to sin; ye are dead to the world. This was a reality to St. Paul. Compare Gal. ii. 19; Phil. iii. 20; Ephs. ii. 6 and 19. Compare Paul at the stoning

of Stephen, and in the jail at Philippi: are they the same? We all know what this is, to some extent, this dying. The youth is dead to many of his longings as a child; the man to his desires as a youth; the old man to the feelings of his middle age. Yet at each stage they are the same. So we are the same persons when dead to sin and alive to God as before, and yet entirely different. What a mystery! yet how true and simple in practice. Paul was the same man before and after his journey to Damascus, and yet he was entirely different. How different the earth is in spring and autumn, and yet it is the same. Look at the earth by the help of the bright sun, and then of the sickly moon. How different, yet the same. But if we are to have any real power in the world, we must die to it. This was the power of Christ. It is not "men *may* rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." But men must rise that way, there is no other. Let us die to sin, and live to Christ.

III.—GOD HAS A COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR INNER LIFE. God alone can completely sympathise. We often choose our friends because they are different from us; in the moment of trouble they cannot give sympathy. And—

"An impalpable resistance  
Holds like natures still at distance.  
Mortal, love that Holy One,  
Or dwell for aye alone."

Therefore God alone is fitted to judge. The judgments of man are never quite right. Justice is a very uneven thing in this world. But the judgment of God will be a revelation. Not a word will be spoken that is not directed by love. Man can tell many of the evils we do, but, as Burns has said, not how much has been resisted. God only knows that. God only knows the midnight agonies of soul and the silent watchings of the penitent spirit.

IV.—GOD HAS A COMPLETE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR FUTURE LIFE. We cannot imagine what it is. The apostle's words are still as true as ever. "Eye hath not seen." But God knows it. For this He loves us. As the gardener cares for the ugly seed all

through the winter, and trains the growing plant in spring, so God cares for us and trains us, not for what we are, but for what we shall be. Many of us, as Christians, feel that worldly people make a better appearance than we do; we often feel as if we commit daily more sin than they do. It may be that some outside the church are better; but if they do not daily look to God, they become gradually worse; we, bad though we may be, looking to God, are daily becoming better. God knows all this mystery of future life; it is hid with Him. Oh, joy that is hid in Christ with Him.

T. TRAVERS SHERLOCK, B.A.

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### Esau and the Blessing.

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“AND IT CAME TO PASS,” &c.—*Genesis* xxvii. 30–40.

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Do you shut Esau entirely out of your sympathy? I do not from mine. There was much in his character and manner of life which we are unable to approve. Yet, in reference to some of the proceedings, he was possibly as much sinned against as sinning.

*Birthright and Blessing!* Behold Esau coming home from his hunting, hungry and weary; the calculation and scheming of Jacob in placing within view the tempting savoury pottage. Is it suggested that Esau should have had more self-control, and appreciated spiritual privileges more in accordance with their true value? *Right*; but Isaac likewise ought to have been more considerate, kind, and brotherly.

Then we come to the other scene, of the Blessing. Here Rebekah appears more blameworthy than Jacob; for she first suggested the imposture, overruled the natural objections of Jacob, and made the matter as easy for him as she possibly could. Her maternal affection carried her to sad lengths, and we cannot but wish that she had been less scheming and more wise, less crafty and more trustful in the promised word of Jehovah. But

still Jacob was only too ready to profit by his mother's wicked suggestion, readily learned the language of falsehood, cruelly deceived his aged and almost blind father, reiterated once and again the lie which had been put into his mouth; at length rose up from his father's knees and carried away from Esau the Blessing, as before he had taken away the Birthright. There is reason in Esau's angry and contemptuous inquiry: "Is he not rightly named Jacob, [*i.e.*, a supplanter] for he hath supplanted me these two times?"

I.—This narrative CONVEYS A WARNING AGAINST THE UNDER-VALUING OF PRIVILEGE. Esau's despal of his Birthright led to the loss of both it and the Blessing. "What good shall this birthright do to me?" "Lest there be any . . . profane person, as Esau, . . . for ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." "To him that hath shall be given," &c. God's plan appears to be to give grace, and if that measure of grace is improved, then to give more. [*Cornelius*, Acts x.] "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine."

How do we value our privileges and opportunities? Such as  
(1) Reading the word of God. (2) Hearing that word preached.  
(3) Work in Christ's vineyard. (4) The communion of saints.

II.—The narrative SUGGESTS THAT GOD IS ABLE TO BLESS EVERY DESIRING SOUL. Isaac had blessed Jacob contrary to his intention. Still the attendant circumstances had been so solemn and sacramental that he neither would nor could reverse or recall it. But God has a blessing, nay *the very same* blessing, even ETERNAL LIFE, for each one. Your friend, your brother, your neighbour has obtained it. Be not discouraged, as though he had taken all the blessing which God is able to bestow, "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." "Let the wicked man," *i.e.* every or any wicked man, "forsake his way . . . and . . . the Lord . . . will have mercy upon him." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come." See the inexhaustible nature of the Divine riches exemplified in—

(a) The vast numbers who have been made partakers of it, already passed from mortal sight. Looking heavenward, letting the eye of faith range over the infinite domain of Paradise, we discover rank on rank, a host "unnumbered, without number,

numberless," each and all of whom have received the blessing. The goodly fellowship of the prophets, the glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, the white-robed throngs, amid whom mingle Abel and Enoch, Noah and Abraham, Moses and Joshua, David and Josiah, Isaiah and Daniel, Paul and Peter, James and John. Now they have obtained the promises.

(b) The multitudes on their way at this moment to the same heavenly kingdom, who have "obtained like precious faith."

III.—This narrative REMINDS US THAT ONE MAY SEEK THE BLESSING TOO LATE. There is something most piteous and touching about the loud wailing cry of the twice-defrauded Esau: "Bless me, even me also, O my father." "Hast thou not a blessing for me . . . but one blessing, my father?" And, *observe*, though Esau obtained at last *a* blessing, he did not realize *the* BLESSING. "Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." So, many will cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," when it is, alas, too late.

ST. CLEMENTS, BRISTOL.

FAIRFAX GOODALL, B.A.

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### The Christian's Hope.

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"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST," &c.—1 *Peter* i. 3-5.

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THIS epistle was addressed to the "strangers dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia," &c. Persecution had driven them from the comforts of home and the society of friends. All their earthly goods, whether inherited or otherwise, they forfeited by espousing the cause of Christ. Hence the comforting and deep significance of the imagery of the text. All Christians are "*strangers* dispersed," not at rest, nor at home, but on the traveller's way. We notice—

I.—THE NATURE of the Christian's hope,—"lively." Hope,



whether in its man-ward, or God-ward reference, is a compound of desire and expectation. Desire, or expectation alone is not hope; we may desire that which we never expect, and we may expect that which we do not desire. Hope *always* has an object which is *both expected and desired*. The Christian's hope is called a "lively hope." It has a spring and buoyancy about it peculiar to itself. It may be that the knowledge of God gained through the intercession of Christ, and the light thrown upon human character and destiny by His *teaching, resurrection, and ascension*, have imparted a life and vigour to the hope of the believer unknown to human consciousness even before the fall.

II.—THE SOURCE of the Christian's hope,—“His abundant mercy.” Salvation is neither merited nor bought. Out of the infinite depths of “His abundant mercy” the whole structure and machinery of human redemption has sprung. Though the grand enterprise demanded the death of His only begotten Son, yet His abundant mercy and love were equal to the sacrifice. “’Tis mercy all immense and free.”

III.—THE FOUNDATION of the Christian's hope,—“The resurrection of Jesus Christ.” Why this? His resurrection, foretold by Himself, declares Him to be the true Messiah, and at once crowns Him with victory over death and the grave. His teachings were well adapted to inspire hope, but if He had mouldered in the grave like ordinary mortals, no “lively hope” could be ours. He assumed so much, and made such wonderful revelations and promises, that hope could not have been “lively” if He had continued in the grave. But His resurrection was the crowning proof of the authority of His teaching, and forms the key-stone in the arch of Christianity.

IV.—THE GLORIOUS OBJECT of the Christian's hope,—“An inheritance.” Volumes have been written, and not very heavenly controversies have been carried on as to whether heaven is, or is not, gained by our good works. But the word, *inheritance*, should authoritatively settle that question. It implies there is a family relationship, and that because we are children we are heirs. An inheritance is not a purchase, but a legacy. “Behold what manner of love,” &c. (1 John iii. 1).

V.—THE CERTAINTY that this hope shall be realised. The Christian has a threefold assurance.

(1) The *location* of the inheritance. "In heaven." No enemies there—no homeless ones. They never trespass on the property, or mar the portion of the younger members of the family who are distant, acquiring a meetness for the inheritance.

(2) The *special attention* given to the inheritance. "Reserved in heaven." Jesus Christ has the general oversight of the inheritance of all younger members of the family. He will not allow it to diminish in value, or the mansions to get out of repair.

(3) *The Christian himself is "preserved"* for the inheritance. "Kept by the power of God." Thank God for the blessed certainty that the Christian's hope shall be gloriously realised. That He has promised to bring us off more than conquerors over the *world*, the *flesh*, and the *devil*, and crown us ultimately with the full glory of His presence.

"Where hope in sight is swallowed up,  
And prayer in endless praise."

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

"BE comforted : perhaps there is some island of the blest where there will be no occasion for pushing. Once this happened to me, that a great fierce obdurate crowd were pushing up in long line towards a door which was to lead them to some good thing ; and I, not liking the crowd, stole out of it, having made up my mind to be last, and was leaning indolently against a closed up side door, when all of a sudden this door opened, and I was the first to walk in, and saw arrive, long after me, the men who had been thrusting and struggling round me. This does not often happen in the world, but I think there was a meaning in it." Sir ARTHUR HELPS.

## *Homiletical Commentary.*

### NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

#### “The Wisdom not from Above.”

Chapter iii. 13-16.—“WHO IS A WISE MAN AND ENDUED WITH KNOWLEDGE AMONG YOU? LET HIM SHEW OUT OF A GOOD CONVERSATION HIS WORKS WITH MEEKNESS OF WISDOM. BUT IF YE HAVE BITTER ENVYING AND STRIFE IN YOUR HEARTS, GLORY NOT, AND LIE NOT AGAINST THE TRUTH. THIS WISDOM DESCENDETH NOT FROM ABOVE, BUT IS EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH. FOR WHERE ENVYING AND STRIFE IS, THERE IS CONFUSION AND EVERY EVIL WORK.”

EVERYBODY likes to be thought wise, intelligent, learned; not everybody takes the best way to effect this so desirable result. Some, indeed, in their eager desire to let it be seen how very wise, and intelligent, and learned they are, only make it the more evident that their wisdom is but folly, their intelligence of but a very limited kind, their learning but another name for ignorance. Such are those who are much given to talk, who are slow to hear but swift to speak, always bringing themselves forward, giving their opinions in all circumstances and at all times. Their schemes are the wisest, their suggestions the most judicious, indeed no others could for a moment be entertained; to hint at anything else is to call forth their bitter resentment: slow to hear but swift to speak are they.

*In much  
talk, folly.*

It is the conduct of such as these the apostle has had before him in all the severe and terrible things he has been saying about the power of the tongue for evil, its influence in originating and perpetuating strifes, and confusions, and every evil work.

He has been considering the case of not a few in the early Church, who, with a morbid, incurable hankering after notoriety, were ever finding occasion, or making it, for taking part in the public services, for instructing or exhorting the people; and who

just because notoriety, and not edification, was their  
**Of every kind** motive, were ever making occasion of mischief,  
**and degree.** irritating and wounding the feelings of others,  
 calling forth counter-recriminations, inflaming and fostering animosities till the congregations of believers were no longer the abodes of peace, no longer the homes of that wisdom which is pure and peaceable, gentle and persuasive; the arenas, rather, where bitter envying and strife fought out their unhallowed battles, and where confusion and every evil work were the sure and certain trophies that naturally disfigured the walls of what ought to have been the temples of holiness and peace. These men thought they were very wise. Guides of the blind, lights of them which were in darkness, instructors of the foolish, teachers of babes; if they had had the wisdom they fancied they had, they would have acted very differently, they would have been slow to speak, they would have lived on the Word of God, and so their religion would have appeared in the genuine fruits of it, good works, and these in the meekness with which all true wisdom is ever accompanied, or, rather, of which it is always an essential element; for the wisdom that is "from above" is "peaceable" and "full of good works."

This is the thought the apostle proceeds to set forth practically and personally, as is his wont. He addresses his readers individually, singly, with the arresting word, "Who is a wise

man and endued with knowledge *among you*?"  
**This apostle** Which of you would like to be thought such, would  
**is always** like to be such? Well, there is a way, one way,  
**personal in** only one way, not by talking, but by doing, by  
**his address.** producing the *fruits of wisdom*; "let him show out of a good conversation his works in meekness of wisdom."

To interpret the word "conversation" here after modern usage would be just so far to misinterpret the meaning of the apostle, for conversation or talk is just the thing he is trying to put out

of hearing altogether. What he wants to insist upon is something like this: the way or behaviour of a man whose way or behaviour is such that he would not shrink from letting other men see it; the walking here and there, the turning to the right or to the left of a man whose heart, and therefore whose ways, are right with God. ("To him who ordereth his *conversation* aright." "Be ye holy in all manner of *conversation*." "Let your *conversation* be without covetousness;" and elsewhere.)

"Out of a good conversation his works." Conversation or behaviour the general characteristic; his works the special manifestations, the occasional or particular forms in which this comes out: generally, the walk and conversation becoming the Gospel, specially the individual acts which, day by day, or on extraordinary occasions, show this becomingness; generally, the main stream of a holy life; specially, the fruitful trees and sweet scented flowers it produces and nourishes on its banks.

To get at the apostle's meaning our usage of the word conversation was to put aside: to get at his complete meaning, and to have the fullest illustration of it, we need to recur to our usage of the word. Out of a good conversation (or behaviour) his good works, specially this one, a good conversation, a sweet, pure, wholesome, and elevating talk or discourse; such a style of converse, such a selection of subject, such a manner of speech as shall leave an impression of health, healing, heavenly communion. There is frivolous talk, empty, self-centred talk—talk which is only the most animated when the subject is self, or its surroundings; and there is grave talk, thoughtful, wise talk, where self never obtrudes, in which all such petty concerns have no place. Then there is pure talk, chaste conversation, discourse which never needs to interrupt itself should a child or a woman enter the room,—discourse where never allusion or innuendo raises a blush. And there is impure talk, unchaste conversation—the conversation of men in whose company one does not feel sure that at any turn of the discourse something shall not be said that is earthly and sensual. Can any man deceive himself so far as to think that such discourse can

Conversation  
a very  
small part of  
behaviour.

A very large  
part.



come out of conversation becoming the Gospel? Does not *he* rather commend himself as one who lives near his Saviour, whose words are the words of purity, that Saviour who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, without spot and without blemish?

Out of a good conversation (or behaviour) his works; in the meekness of wisdom, meekness which is characteristic of true wisdom, the meekness of Him who was wisdom. The wisdom of God dwelt with men, and when He would draw them to Himself

All this  
where  
meekness is.

these were the words He spake, "Learn of Me, for I am meek!" The meekness of wisdom, the form which wisdom ever takes. A quick, bitter, irritating

speech, a haughty, overbearing, presuming manner, an arrogant and dogmatic tone; is this the manifestation of wisdom; of wisdom which has such serene control of itself, and which, withal, has such reverence for man, made in the image of God? Is it not rather the expression of folly, of a weak, wayward, ungoverned nature which mistakes bluster for courage and rudeness for honesty, yea, does it not testify to the presence and predominance of other feelings more evil and more hurtful still, bitter envying and strife, a wisdom that in its least evil and hurtful form is earthly?

It is this further evil thing which the apostle now brings up to the surface and out in the light: the meekness of wisdom suggests the contrast; the hush of peace is broken by the strife of tongues. "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth:" glory not over others, your brethren, and lie not against the truth which is so openly set before you in this meekness of wisdom, and against which *your* conduct is such a flagrant offence. Envy and the strife that is sure to rise out of it, both of these assert superiority: envy reaches up its hand to drag a man down from his excellency; strife seizes hold of him to cast him down to the ground, each of them in the very nature of it glorying over others, despising man who is made in the image of God. Now, says the apostle, this glorying being wholly opposed to the spirit of wisdom which

This  
zeal hurtful  
to man.

is the spirit of Christ, you must, if you would keep your connection with Him, give up. You think it is zeal for God which urges you, and you think you

are doing God service; you are only gratifying your own selfish and arrogant feelings; zeal which is bitter, exceedingly mad and persecuting, ignorant, unhallowed zeal, the gall of asps.

But there is more than this: the conduct of such as manifested these feelings was not only arrogance as against man, it was **Antagonistic to the truth.** opposition, of the worst kind, to God; it was a lying against the truth on the part of those who were sworn to defend it. An infidel may deny the truth, he may say it is a lie, and so refuse to believe and live it, and in proportion to his influence do it hurt, but a believer, whose conduct is a contradiction to his belief, can do far more harm than the infidel, he can lie against the truth, he can make the world believe that "the truth" is his rendering of the truth: he can make the world believe a lie. As thus: "I am a believer in Christ; I have accepted the creed of the Christian, and I am guiding my life by its precepts and moulding my life by its principles; meanwhile the manifestations of my life are envy, contempt, arrogant and revengeful treatment of my fellowmen, unforgiveness, relentless wrath. Men see me; they know what I profess to be; they take me at my word; and they say, the less they have to do with the Gospel the better." Why **As, for example.** do they say this? Because I have lied against the Truth, I have represented it to be what it is not, I have denied it to be what it is. Consider the effect of the hard speeches, the cruel insinuations that men will make in ecclesiastical debates, in religious controversy, in congregational disputes, upon ordinary worldly men and women: do you think James uses too strong language when he says, "Lie not against the truth"?

It is of importance to observe that the apostle in this place is not condemning religious controversy; controversy about religious things in a religious spirit. Christian men may differ in their interpretation of scriptural doctrine, the circumstances in which they are placed may make it their duty to give publicity to their differences, and in this there is nothing at variance with the spirit of meekness; nay, it is oftentimes their sacred duty to **Legitimate controversy.** contend earnestly for the truth once delivered to the saints, giving a reason to every one for the

truth which is in them. The wrong thing is party spirit; the fight not for truth but for victory, not so much "to be on the side of truth, as to have truth on our side." Zeal is a good thing, zeal about religion is a good thing; it is good always to be zealously affected about a good thing; but irreligious zeal, bitter envying and strife in religion, this is not good; this wisdom—men may call it by that name if they like and plume

themselves on their fancied superiority over others—  
**The Opposite.** this wisdom descendeth not from above, its origin is not heavenly, neither is its nature, it is earthly, sensual, devilish.

First: It is not from above, it is not learnt of God, it is not suggested or inspired by God, there is nothing in the revealed truth of God which could produce it. Truth believed produces *corresponding* feelings; which of the truths of God is it that produces envy, where is the text that may be quoted to justify a malevolent affection? Grieve not the spirit of God! The word "earthly" is easily understood; it means everything pertaining

to earthly pursuits and policy; policy of expediency  
**Its features,** and compromise, the policy of prudential reserve to  
**earthly.** gain a point, of arrogant overbearingness to keep it.

There is nothing of the sensitively scrupulous about it, it is not troubled with anything of the nature of keen conscientiousness, it is not deterred by the thought of other people's feelings.

The idea of the apostle, under the word "sensual," here is apt to be misunderstood, inasmuch as our modern use of the word is, in the main, not his. By this word he means enslaved to the senses, governed by the passions: in his meaning of it, the apostle would rather suggest a higher degree and wider sweep of what he has already designated by the word earthly; all that pertains to the lower

nature, the natural, or soulish man, the man who is not spiritual. Earthly and sensual; these indulged in tend to harden and debase a man, to eat out all the finer sensibilities. "They harden a' the heart, and petrify the feelings," and so the apostle, with the sternness of the truth, descends to the lowest depths to which the natural carnal man can sink, and finds these to be the depths of Satan!

This is a terrible thing to say, but terrible things have to be said, and if they are true, and if men are likely to be morally injured if they are not said, is it not one of the most merciful things to say them? Scripture tells us of the abode of the lost,

Merciful to  
say true  
things.

to which impenitent sinners consign themselves, was it not a merciful thing to tell men that? And when men, professing Christian men, in their envyings and strifes exhibit a Satanic spirit, the spirit of him who was a liar and and a murderer from the beginning, is it not well, is it not merciful, to warn them of what spirit they are and of the danger in which they stand? Envy *is* Satanic; the strife which envy occasions is Satanic; party spirit, in this excess to which it is carried, is Satanic; shall not then Scripture stand in the way of men and utter of these things the true and the merciful warnings and dissuasives?

The apostle closes with an appeal to conscience and experience. An envious feeling in a man's heart, what confusion, what agitations, what discord? Strife occasioned by envy, in a community, what anarchies and upheavals? Every evil work! Bad and base of every kind and of every degree! No good thing can grow where envy dwells: its poisonous presence turns even that which is good into occasion of evil, and that which is already evil it makes tenfold more a child of evil than it was before. "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." Listen to the contrast, it falls like music upon the tired ear.

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy; and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

The contrast.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM  
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Praterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

## No. IV.

## A Transcendent Being and an Admirable Character.

"I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING, SAITH THE LORD, WHICH IS, AND WHICH WAS, AND WHICH IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY. I JOHN, WHO ALSO AM YOUR BROTHER, AND COMPANION IN TRIBULATION, AND IN THE KINGDOM AND PATIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST, WAS IN THE ISLE THAT IS CALLED PATMOS, FOR THE WORD OF GOD, AND FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST."—*Revelation* i. 8, 9.

HERE we have two objects arresting our attention and demanding thought.

I.—A BEING WHOSE EXISTENCE IS TRANSCENDENT. "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to*

*come.*" Although these words are considered of doubtful authority, and probably an interpolation, they are a representation of the Infinite One. They not only agree with other declarations of Him in Sacred Writ, but they are repeated elsewhere.\* Here is

\* See verses 11, 17; ii. 8; xxi. 6; xxii. 13. Isaiah xli. 4; xlv. 6; xlviii. 12.



First: Eternity. "*I am Alpha and Omega.*" (1) Eternity in relation to all the past. "*I am Alpha,*" that is, the first, the beginning. There is not a creature throughout immensity that had not a "*beginning,*" but there is no point in the past in which He was not. Go back through all the million ages and through all the million millenniums and you reach no point in which He did not exist. He occupied the boundlessness of immensity alone. No one thought or felt or moved but He. It was with Him to determine as to whether there should be any other existence besides His own. The universes that have been, that are, and that are yet to be, were all in His eternal mind, in archetype and possibility. (2) Eternity also in relation to the future. "*The beginning and the ending.*" All that have had a beginning will peradventure have an end; yea, certainly so, unless He determines otherwise. Both the commencement and continuance of all things hang on His will; but He will never have an end. All life may be extinguished, the whole

universe go back to chaos and be lost in the abysses of non-entity, but He will be.

"Even as darkness self-impregnated brings forth  
Creative light and silence, speech :  
so beams,  
Known through all ages, hope and help of man,  
One God omnific, sole, original,  
Wise, wonder-working wielder of the whole,  
Infinite, inconceivable, immense,  
The midst without beginning, and the first  
From the beginning, and of all Being last."—*Festus.*

Here is—

Secondly: Omnipotence. "*The Almighty.*" There is nothing impossible for Him to do but wrong. "It is impossible for God to lie," to deceive, or defraud. This moral weakness is His glory. "God is truth and light is shadow," says *Plato*. "The Lord is great in power: He hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth. The mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His

presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein." Here we see—

II.—A MAN WHOSE CHARACTER IS ADMIRABLE.

First: Here is a character of distinguished excellence described. "*I John, who also am your brother, and companion (partaker) in tribulation.*" John describes himself (1) As a *brother*. His heart glows with a Christly fraternity for the good of all the churches throughout all the world. He describes himself (2) As a *sufferer*. He is in "*tribulation.*" The best men on earth are subject to suffering. He was a member of the kingdom of Christ, a loving, faithful, loyal subject of His spiritual empire. "*The kingdom and patience of (which are in) Christ Jesus.*" In that kingdom he was a companion with all who suffered, a fellow-partaker of their tribulations. There has always been suffering in connection with the kingdom of Christ, and all the sufferers feel a blessed companionship. During the first hundred years, persecutions in this kingdom were very sanguinary and severe. Here we have—

Secondly: A character of distinguished excellence banished by bloody persecutors. "*In the isle that is called Patmos.*" This was the scene of his banishment: a rocky island in the Mediterranean, about fifteen miles in circumference,—a most wild, barren spot; a convict settlement, whither the Romans banished all criminal wretches they deemed unfit for liberty. On this desolate island, amidst the greatest villians of the age, this great character was banished. Strange that the Providence of heaven should have allowed one of the most Christly men on the earth at that time to live for an hour in such a scene. But Patmos to John and Patmos to the other residents was a different place. To John it was a theatre of sublimest revelations, the very gate of heaven. He was not alone there; he felt himself surrounded by a great "multitude which no man could number," with countless thousands of angels; and there he wrote a book to bless humanity through every coming age. Here we have—

Thirdly: A character of dis-

tinguished excellence banished by bloody persecutors for the cause of Christ. "*For the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.*" He was there, not because he had perpetrated any crime, but because he had rendered the highest service to his age. He bore "*testimony of Jesus*" and preached the "*word of God.*" "John had now," says *Dr. Vaughan*, "reached a late point in his long pilgrimage. The storm of persecution had broken upon him in his gentle and steadfast ministry at Ephesus, and had driven him to the little island of Patmos for the testimony of

the truth. In that solitude however he was not alone. Shut out as he was now from all Christian converse, he was only the more fitted for converse with Christ. Debarred by no fault of his own from all Christian ordinances, expelled from that congregation in which for so long, day after day, he had uttered the message of truth and the call of love, he was admitted now to worship in the very sanctuary above, and to receive, if he might no longer give, instruction from the lips of the Divine Master Himself."

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"The varieties of Nature are adapted to the varieties of the human mind. The shady glen, with its rich foliage and melody of bird and stream, has its perfection of charms for a pure and pensive spirit like Cowper, the Christian Poet. The towering Alps, skirted with pines, tipped with snow, and vermillioned into richest glory by the rising sun, as if a great seraph, with celestial torch, had suddenly lit up their lofty crests, have their Alpine beauty and sublimity, and awaken deep and lofty thoughts and emotions in a soul formed for the grand as well as for the lovely, like that of Coleridge, whose genius gave marvellous expression of its strength and brilliance in the glorious hymn descriptive of Mount Blanc."—From "*The Beautiful and Sublime,*" by GEORGE MATHER.

## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

**A Monarch of Rare Virtue, and a God of Retributive Justice.\***


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“JOSIAH WAS EIGHT YEARS OLD,” &c.—2 *Kings* xxii.

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THERE are two subjects in this chapter that arrest our attention, and which are fertile with suggestions.

I.—A MONARCH OF RARE VIRTUE. “*Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem,*” &c., &c. In this monarch we discover four distinguished merits.

First: Religiousness of action. “*He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.*” This is the testimony of this historian, whoever he might be, inspired or uninspired we know not. Whether he knew what was “*right in the sight of the Lord,*” or not, we cannot aver; or whether he had correct information of David’s life, when he says, “*Josiah walked in all the way of David his father,*” we

know not. Elsewhere we have given the Biblical account of David’s life.† From that account it can scarcely be considered that to “*walk in the way of David*” was a morally creditable life. But taking the opinion of the writer, and we have nothing else to go by in this case, Josiah was a man whose activity was inspired by the religious feeling. Here we find him providing for the repairs of the Temple. “*And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying, go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is brought into the house of the Lord, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the*

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\* For treatment of narrative in chap. xxi. see *Homilist*, vol. xxi. page 1.

† See my Commentary on the Book of Psalms, vol. 3.

people: and let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord: and let them give it to the doers of the work which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house." The king who provides for the religious instruction and worship of his people, proves thereby that he is under the influence of the religious sentiment. In repairing the Temple, Josiah honours his people not only by allowing, but in encouraging them to co-operate with him in the noble work. He coerces none, all were left free, and they did their work honestly and honourably. "*Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.*" We discover in Josiah—

Secondly: Docility of mind. "*And Hilkiyah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiyah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the*

*king word again : . . . And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiyah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.*" What book was this? Old time buries the choicest books; volumes that once moved the intellects and fired the hearts of men, are rotting under the black waves of oblivion. In all probability the book here was the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. A copy of this it seems having been laid beside the ark in the most holy place (Deut. xxxi. 25, 26), had been lost, and now during the repairing of the Temple, it was discovered. Was this a Divine book? If so, why should its author have suffered it to have been lost, perhaps for generations? A human author, had he the power to prevent it, would not suffer his productions to meet with such a fate. But the thoughts of God are independent of books, they are not only written on the pages of nature, but in imperishable characters on the



souls of men. But how did Josiah act towards this discovered book? Did he reject it, or was he indifferent to it? No. "*It came to pass when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.*" Herein how unlike is this man not only to ordinary mortals, but also to kings. Have kings ever been ready to receive new light? Are they not so mailed in traditions and prejudices as to render the admission of a new truth well-nigh impossible? If the modern occupants of thrones would but open their eyes to those old truths of eternal right which come flashing from their graves, all oppressions would cease, and kingdoms would march on to freedom and light. "Be wise now therefore O ye kings, be instructed ye judges of the earth." In Josiah we see—

Thirdly: Tenderness of heart. See how the discovery of the book affected him. "*He rent his clothes.*" It is also said, in verse nineteen, "*Thine heart was tender.*" Sensibility of heart gives life, worth, and power to intellect. Where sensibility and intellect

are not in their due proportion the character is defective. Where the sensibility is stronger than the intellect, the man is likely to become a morbid pietist, or a reckless fanatic. Where the intellect is stronger in proportion to the sensibility, the man is likely to become a cold theorist, living in the frigid abstractions of his own brain. But where both are properly combined, you have a man fit for great things. A man, who if he be a friend, will give counsels that will tell alike on your understanding and heart. Sensibility feathers the arrows of argument, gives poetry and power to thought. In Josiah we see—

Fourthly: Actualisation of conviction. When this discovered document came under Josiah's attention, and its import was realised, he was seized with a conviction that he, his fathers, and his people, had disregarded, and even outraged, the written precepts of heaven. He exclaims, "*Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according*

unto all that which is written concerning us." With this new conviction burning within him, what does he do? Does he strive to quench it, or does he allow it to burn itself out without any effort on his part? No, he at once commands his servants to make an effort on behalf of himself and his people. "*Go ye, enquire of the Lord for me and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the word of this book that is found.*" The new emotions that rushed into his tender heart, prompted him to seek immediate counsel how to avert the curses under which his kingdom lay. They obeyed his behests. "*So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college;) and they communed with her. And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, thus saith the Lord, Behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all*

*the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: because they have forsaken Me," &c. Verses 14-18. Was this prophetess Divinely inspired, and had she a right to say "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel"? I trow not. This, however, is certain, she spoke the universal sentiment of mankind, viz., that where wrong is, suffering must follow. All experience, all history attests the truth of the sentiment.*

But the noteworthy point here is, that this tender-hearted man *translated his emotions into actions*. He did not allow his new feelings to pass away as the morning dew, nor did he expend them in sentimental sighs and groans. Well would it be for all men if they acted thus, for this, in truth, is the only method of spiritual progress. It is only as men embody true thoughts and feelings in actions that they rise to true manhood. In this chapter we have presented—

II.—A GOD OF RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE. Such a God the prophetess here reveals. "*Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to*

*Me, thus saith the Lord, Behold I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read."*

The government over us, and to which we are bound with chains stronger than adamant, is retributive, it never allows evil to go unpunished. It links in indissoluble bonds sufferings to sin. Sorrows follow sin by a law as immutable and resistless as the waves follow the moon. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." In this retribution (1) the wicked are treated with severity, and (2) the good are treated with favour. In the name of God this prophetess declares concerning Josiah, "*As touching the words which thou hast heard; because thine heart was tender and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes and wept before Me; I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. Behold therefore, I will gather*

*thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place."* Though righteous judgments were soon to descend upon his country on account of its manifold and heinous sins, he, Josiah, who had proved faithful amongst the faithless, would be spared the terrible storm. He should neither feel it nor see it, his body would be sleeping in the quiet grave, and his spirit be gathered to his "*fathers*," with all the true men of past times. We are prone to think of death as an evil, it is an event that often appals us with the ghastly aspects that it assumes before our imagination. There are circumstances that make it appear especially sad. For example: when a man, like Josiah, of immense influence for good, dies in the zenith of life, and in the midst of usefulness, we deem it an evil of special sadness. But it is not so, either to the man himself or to his generation. He is taken away from the evil that is coming, and the circumstance of his death, and the loss of

his departure, tend to rouse his contemporaries to serious and salutary thought. Death is no respecter of persons. The Divine government of the world is like a stream that rolls under us; men are only as bubbles that rise on its surface; some are brighter and larger and sparkle longer

in the sun than others: but all must break, whilst the mighty current rolls on in its wonted majesty. We are shadows, and following shadows. There is nothing real but God.

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## SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

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No. VII.

D U T Y .

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"PUT THEM IN MIND TO BE SUBJECT TO PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS, TO OBEY MAGISTRATES, TO BE READY TO EVERY GOOD WORK, TO SPEAK EVIL OF NO MAN, TO BE NO BRAWLERS, BUT GENTLE, SHEWING ALL MEEKNESS UNTO ALL MEN. FOR WE OURSELVES ALSO WERE SOMETIMES FOOLISH, DISOBEDIENT, DECEIVED, SERVING DIVERS LUSTS AND PLEASURES, LIVING IN MALICE AND ENVY, HATEFUL, AND HATING ONE ANOTHER."—*Titus* iii. 1-3.

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"VERY careful," says *Canon Spence*, "and searching have been the apostle's charges to Titus respecting the teachers of the Church, their doctrine and their life: very particular have been his directions, his warnings and exhortations, to men and women of different

ages, on the subject of their home life. But with the exception of a slight digression, in the case of a slave to a Pagan master, his words had been written with a reference generally to Christian life among Christians. But there was then a great life outside

the little Christian world: how were the people of Christ to regulate their behaviour in their dealings with the vast Pagan world outside? Paul goes to the root of the matter at once when he says, 'Put them in mind,' &c." We have here duty in a threefold relation,—in relation to civil government, in relation to general society, and in relation to our moral self. Here is duty—

I.—In relation to CIVIL GOVERNMENT. "*Put them in mind to be subject (in subjection) to principalities (rulers) and powers (authorities), to obey magistrates (to be obedient).*" It is here implied, and fully taught elsewhere (Rom. xiii. 1-7), that civil government is of *Divine appointment*. "There is no power but of God," says Paul. That the principle of civil government is Divine is not only revealed but implied in the very constitution of society.

First: Man's social *tendencies* indicate it. Some men are royal in their instincts and powers, and are evidently made to rule. Others are servile, cringing in tendency,

feeble in faculty, and made to obey. There is a vast gradation of instinct and power in human society, and it is an eternal principle in God's government that the lesser shall serve the greater.

Secondly: Man's social *exigencies* indicate it. Every community, to be kept in order, must have a recognised head,—one who shall be allowed to rule, either by his own will or the organised will of the whole. Hence man, in his most savage state, has some recognised chief. The principle of civil government is, therefore, manifestly of Divine appointment. We may rest assured that civil government, being of Divine appointment, it is for *good* and good only. Indeed, we learn that Paul's idea of a civil ruler is that he is a "minister of God to thee for good." But what is good? The answer in which all will agree is this, *obedience to the Divine will*. What is the standard of virtue? Not the decree of an autocrat, not public sentiment, even when organised into constitutional law, but the will of God. "Whether it be right in the



sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." The civil government, therefore, that does not harmonise with His will, as revealed by Christ the Infallible Logos, is not the government of which Paul speaks. Taking Christ as the Revealer of God's will we may infer that the infringement of human rights is not in accordance with the will of God, and, therefore, not good. Also that the promotion of injustice, impurity, and error is not according to the will of God, and, therefore, not good. The Bible never teaches, nor does moral philosophy, that we are bound to obey laws that are not righteous, to honour persons that are not honour worthy. If we are commanded to honour the king, the precept implies that the king's character is worthy of his office. Some kings it is religious to despise and loathe. If we are commanded to honour our parents, the language implies that our parents are honour worthy. Some parents display attributes of character suited to awaken the utmost hatred and contempt. In like manner we are commanded to be

subject to the higher powers, and the injunction implies that what these higher powers enact is right. The obligation of obedience is ever dependent upon the righteousness of the command. Here is duty—

II.—In relation to GENERAL SOCIETY. There are three duties here indicated which every man owes to his fellows.

First: Usefulness. "*Be ready to every good work.*" The law of universal benevolence which we see in nature, our own instincts and faculties, as well as the written Word, teach us that man was made to serve his brother; the grand end of each is to promote the happiness of others. No man fulfils his mission or realises his destiny who is not an *altruist*, who is not ever actuated by regard for the happiness of others. Altruism is God's social law and is binding on every one; disregard to it is the source of all social disorders and miseries. "The soul of the truly benevolent man does not seem to reside much in its own body. Its life, to a great extent, is a mere reflex of the lives of others. It migrates into their bodies, and, identifying its

existence with their existence, finds its own happiness in increasing and prolonging their pleasures, in extinguishing or solacing their pains." Another duty here indicated is—

Secondly : Charitableness. "*To speak evil of no man.*" "This," says Dr. Fairbairn, "imports more than to speak evil in the ordinary sense: it is to act the part of a reviler or slanderer; and when used of conduct from one man towards another, always betokens the exercise of a very bitter and malignant spirit. Titus was to charge the Christians of Crete to give no exhibition towards anyone of such a spirit, nor to show a quarrelsome disposition, but, on the contrary, to cultivate a mild, placable, and gentle temper." There are evils of some sort or other attaching to all men, and in some men they are of the most hideous and heinous character. To ignore them, if possible, would be wrong; to feel them is natural to the pure, and to denounce them is right. But to speak of them before others, to parade them before the eyes of others, argues a base and malignant nature. Should

occasion require us to speak of them, it should be in the saddest tones of tenderness and even with compassionate indignation. Another duty here indicated is—

Thirdly: Courteousness. "*To be no brawlers* (not to be contentious), *but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.*" How much there is in society, how much in every department of life—mercantile, mechanical, and mental—one meets with to annoy and irritate, especially those fated with an irascible nature. Still, amidst the strongest provocations, courtesy is our duty, yes, and our dignity, too. Here is duty—

III.—In relation to our MORAL SELF. The apostle urges the duty of forbearance to what was wrong in government and society, by reminding them of the wrong in their own past lives. "*We ourselves also were sometimes foolish,*" we had no proper understanding of the true: "*disobedient,*" indisposed to do what is right: "*deceived,*" swerving from the true mode of life: "*serving divers lusts and pleasures,*" slaves of impure passions, revelling in the

sensual and the gross: "*living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another,*" we once spent our days in the atmosphere of hate and malign passions.

It is a duty which every man owes to himself to remember all the wrong of his past life; remember it (1) That he may be *charitable towards others*. (2) That he may be *stimulated to efforts of self-improvement*. (3) That he may *adore the forbearance of God in His past dealings*. (4) That he may *devoutly appreciate the morally redemptive agency of Christ*. (5) That he may *realise the necessity of seeking the moral restoration of others*.

Two things may be inferred from Paul's language concerning the past moral condition of himself and others.

(a) The *possibility* of the

moral improvement of souls. The rough stone can be polished, the unfertile soil can be made fertile, the wilderness can blossom as the rose. Another thing that may be inferred is—

(b) The *obligation* to the moral improvement of souls.

CONCLUSION.—Let us find out our duty and follow it, through storm as well as sunshine, even unto death. In the realisation of our duty is our strength, our nobleness, our heaven.

"Yet do thy work : it shall succeed  
In thine or in another's day,  
And if denied the victor's meed  
Thou shalt not lack the toiler's pay.

"Then faint not, falter not, nor plead  
Thy weakness : truth itself is strong;  
The lion's strength, the eagle's speed  
Are not alone vouchsafed to wrong."  
—Whittier.

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"After all, what is speculation to practice? What does God require of us but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with Him? The longer I live this seems to me more important, and all other questions less so. If we can but live the simple, right life, do the work that's nearest, though it's dull at times, helping when we meet them, lame dogs over stiles."—CANON KINGSLEY.

## Seedlings.

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### A Righteous Pulpit.

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"LET THY PRIEST BE CLOTHED WITH RIGHTEOUSNESS."—*Psalm cxxxii. 9.*

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WE hear advocated on platforms and elsewhere, different kinds of ministry. Some are urgent for a *talented* ministry. We cannot have too much talent in the pulpit; and none, we think, but genuinely talented men should venture to aspire to the office. Never, perhaps, in any age was there so little natural talent in the pulpit as now: small-brained, small-natured preachers abound. Some are urgent for an *educated* ministry. They insist on culture. But if by education is meant a mere intellectual acquaintance with classic learning, theology, homiletics, and such knowledge, it is of but little worth, and without something higher it rather tends to make men pedants than preachers. The born priest might do without colleges, although none will value true learning more than he. Some are urgent for an *evangelical* ministry. If by evangelical, is meant the conventional thing preached by the popular revivalists of the age, neither rational reflection nor intelligent observa-

tion has a word to commend it. For the evangelicalism of the creeds we utter no plea, but for the evangelicalism of Christ we would plead with all the force of our mind and all the passion of our nature.

The great want, however, is a righteous ministry. "*Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness.*" Not with ecclesiastical robes, not merely with theological learning, but with righteousness. *A righteous ministry is the ministry that is wanted.* What is a righteous ministry?

I.—A ministry that advocates THE PRINCIPLES OF RECTITUDE. The dogmas of a traditional faith, the peculiar theories of a sect, these are advocated everywhere. But the eternal principles of justice, as inculcated in the ethical teachings and embodied in the self-sacrificing life of Christ, these, for the most part, lie silent in the shade. If they speak, it is only occasionally, not persistently, it is with bated breath, not in thunderous passion. Such was not the

ministry of Christ. "He came to establish judgment (rectitude) on the earth." His sermon on the Mount should be the text and the imperial inspiration of every teacher. What is a righteous ministry?

II.—A ministry that advocates the principles of rectitude IN AN HONEST WAY. (1) *Conscientiously*, believing in them. (2) *Consistently*, living them. (3) *Independently*, disregarding alike the frowns and smiles of men. A ministry in fact that "commends itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." What is a righteous ministry?

III.—A ministry that not merely advocates the principles of rectitude in an honest way, but FOR A RIGHT PURPOSE. Not for

popularity, not for greed, not for sect, but for RIGHT. Such a ministry as this the people will believe in, trust, and follow. But now, alas, the pulpit is not trusted and is regarded as a hollow, temporising, charlatanic thing. The clothing of our priests is more manifestly the costume of ambition, greed, and sectarianism, than that of "righteousness." The poet has partially described the preacher the world wants.

"The proud he tamed, the penitent  
he cheered,  
Nor to rebuke the rich offender fear'd;  
His preaching much, but more his  
practice wrought,  
A living sermon of the truths he  
taught."—*Dryden*.

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## The Spirit of Brotherhood like Dew.

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"FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY . . . IS AS THE DEW OF HERMON."—*Psalms* cxxiii. 1, 2.

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I.—Brotherly love is SILENT, NOT DEMONSTRATIVE. Nothing in nature is more silent than the dew. The rain rattles, the wind howls, and the ocean booms, but the dew descends serenely and unheard. Genuine love is never noisy. The deepest emotions are

always the most silent; the shallowest, the most tumultuous. The more eloquent the speeches on the platform of an Evangelical Alliance declaring the love that one Church has for another, the more we doubt its existence. The great sun does not tell me that it



shines, the fact is too patent for words.

II.—Brotherly love is VITAL, NOT MECHANICAL. How refreshing is the dew! It gives new life and verdure to all it touches. Brotherly love is independent of

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organisations, it is independent of all social mechanisms.

III.—Brotherly love is DIVINE RATHER THAN HUMAN. Whence comes the dew? It descends from above. All true love comes from God, as all light from the sun.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

## The Universe.

“THE LORD THAT MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH.”—*Psalm cxxxiv.* 1.

I.—THE UNIVERSE HAD AN ORIGIN. The heaven and the earth are not eternal, they had a beginning. There was a point in the infinite abysses of duration when they were not; when there was no orb to shine, no mind to think, no plant to grow, no heart to feel. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

II.—THE ORIGINATOR OF THE UNIVERSE WAS ONE. “*The Lord.*” He created it alone. There was no one to instruct Him in planning it, no one to aid Him in building it up. Its existence, therefore, is an ever palpable and overwhelm-

ing demonstration of His infinite wisdom, almighty power, and unbounded goodness.

III.—THE ONE ORIGINATOR OF THE UNIVERSE IS THE OBJECT FOR UNIVERSAL PRAISE. “Bless the Lord.” *True worship* should be, therefore, (1) *Undivided*. There is no one to share the praise. (2) *Enthusiastic*. This One Being should be the all-in-all of the soul. (3) *Incessant*. He is ever-present, ever-giving, ever-sustaining, ever-inspiring.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

“Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here too it coincides with religion.”—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

## Days of the Christian Year.

John xvi. 21, 22.

(*The Third Sunday after Easter.*)

“FOR JOY THAT A MAN IS BORN  
UNTO THE WORLD. YOUR JOY NO  
MAN TAKETH FROM YOU.”

TAKING these two words of the Lord together we have—

I.—CIRCUMSTANTIAL JOY, of which we have to speak with some qualification. There are few events which are more universally regarded as occasions for gladness than the birth of a child. When the mother looks into the face of the little babe she has borne, her heart is filled not only with an immeasurable wideness, but with an unspeakable joy. We congratulate parents on a birth in their home, and rightly, for (1) the little child always brings with it love, and pure love may almost be said to be another name for pure joy. (2) Parental relationship means Divine discipline of the kindest and most effectual character: *he* must be a bad man altogether who is not better than he would have been for the chastening, enlarging, ennobling influences of parentage. (3) Fatherhood and motherhood provide the fairest opportunity of noble service any one can desire: on the impressionable heart of the little child may be written heavenly wisdom; from his responsive,

spiritual nature may come forth we know not what beauty, excellency, greatness, power, usefulness. And yet this is not without very serious qualification. Of one man Jesus said, “Good were it for that man if he had never been born,” and of how many others might He not have said that! How many are born into the world who are the children of shame, or of want, or of disease, or of impiety, in whose birth it is hard indeed to find any cause for congratulation. And it is a pathetic thought that *no* child is ever born of whose coming we can be quite sure that we shall ultimately have reason to be glad. The babe may seem healthy and sound, and yet live to endure protracted and intolerable suffering, may be born into plenty, and yet may spend long years of want and struggle, may be born into piety, and yet may grow up to disown all belief in the living God! All joy that rests on circumstance must be largely qualified; there is an uncertainty about it, an insecurity, a transiency, a reserve. Ill is it for those who have no better basis on which to build their heritage and the hope of their hearts.

II.—SPIRITUAL JOY, which stands all tests and lasts through all time. The joy which the disciples felt when they saw the Lord

again, had in it much that was purely spiritual; otherwise they would not have "returned to Jerusalem *with great joy*" when He "was parted from them." (Luke xxiv. 52.) Their gladness of heart was very largely due to a real recognition of Jesus Christ, a spiritual apprehension of their Lord. After that they were no longer at the mercy of events, dependent on the decisions of the Sanhedrim, or the verdict of a Proconsul, or the changeful passions of a multitude. And when men did that which might have turned their joy into sorrow, it proved that their adversaries were practically powerless, for the persecuted disciples went home, blamed and beaten indeed, but with gladness in their soul and with songs upon their lips (Acts iii). So will it be with us; if we are looking for our satisfaction in anything *we have*, in any kind of possession, we shall suffer loss, shall be disappointed, shall have to write "failure" on our life. But if we seek it in that which *we are*, and, emphatically, if we seek our sufficiency in our right relation to Jesus Christ, in that belief in Him which means an acceptance of Him for all that He offers to be to us, then shall we have within us a well-spring of joy which "no man taketh from us," which sickness will not en-

feeble, which accident cannot injure, which is unaffected by all the social, and commercial, and political revolutions that undermine and overthrow so many earthly towers, a joy on which time makes no mark save that of confirmation and security, which death only touches to transform into celestial blessedness and glory.

WILLIAM CLARKSON, B.A.  
BRISTOL.

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JOHN II. 5.

(The Fourth Sunday after Easter.)

"HIS MOTHER SAITH UNTO THE SERVANTS, WHATSOEVER HE SAITH UNTO YOU, DO IT."

THUS Mary (who probably from relationship had some authority in the house) tells the servants of the bridegroom in Cana to render *implicit obedience* to Jesus, who was a guest at that feast. The obedience she recommends is implicit, because (1) so *comprehensive*, "whatsoever," and (2) so *practical*, "do it." Mary's instructions to these servants are (i) *our message* to all men about Christ's claims, and this because it is (ii) *the demand of Scripture*, (iii) *the moral of all best biography*, (iv) *the challenge of His own perfect character*, (v) *the obligations of our gratitude to Him*. The incident before us is a further illustration

of the occasions when such implicit obedience may be claimed, and the result of rightly rendering it. Implicit obedience is claimed—

I.—ALWAYS IN RESPONSE TO HIS PURPOSES OF KINDNESS AND LOVE. He was there to cheer and brighten the circle in which He moved. So He ever is. “Whatsoever” He asks us to do by our gift, or toil, or tongue, or influence, He asks may be a music to soothe or stimulate the true joys of our fellow-men; to render the life of humanity a festival. He did not ignore anxiety, but allayed it; He did not wound the honest pride of hospitality, but protected it; He did not rejoice in discomfiture, but removed it: and His demands on us are to go and do likewise. Implicit obedience is claimed—

II.—OFTEN FOR COMMON AND SIMPLE DUTIES. In this case it was simply a case of providing for a home want, a lack of a luxury. And this is often the sphere in which our obedience to Christ is required. In the counting-house, as well as the church, the kitchen, as well as the kingdom, in care for the waterpots as well as for the sceptre, our loyalty to our Lord may either break down or be manifested.

“I would not have the restless will  
That hurries to and fro,  
Seeking for some great thing to do,  
Some secret thing to know.”

Implicit obedience is claimed—

III.—FREQUENTLY IN WAYS THAT APPEAR UNLIKELY TO SECURE THE END. Here wine was wanted, and the injunction was to fill the vessels with water. How unlikely that wine could be drawn from such vessels. Impossible! the onlooker might say. So is it still very frequently. Our Christian duty lies in the discharge of tasks, the accomplishment of labours that seem very remote from the great end we seek to attain. The duty is ours, the destiny is God's. For us is the lowly work that lies nearest us, obscure it may be, menial it may seem, but do it, and its issue will be the God-intended result. We notice, lastly, when this implicit obedience is yielded—

IV.—RESULTS ARE ENSURED FAR BEYOND EXPECTATION AND STRENGTH OF EFFORT. There is here obedience, simple, matter-of-fact, homely obedience. But it is blessed by the Divine Master, and lo! there is miraculous transformation, water becomes wine. So all through the higher forms of activity, as well as this lower one, Paul plants, Apollos waters, God gives the increase.

CONCLUSION.—See in Christ, not only the Lord who claims implicit obedience, but the Exemplar who Himself renders it to His Father, “obedient unto death;”

and the Helper by whose aid we may become loyal also. "My grace is sufficient for you." EDITOR.

**John xvi. 30, 31, 32.**

*(The Fifth Sunday after Easter.)*

"NOW ARE WE SURE THAT THOU KNOWEST ALL THINGS," &c.

As the time of Christ's stay with His disciples was drawing to a close, He drew them closer than ever to Himself. In the Paschal Chamber, on the eve of His passion and death, there was a beautiful tenderness in His manner toward them; a tenderness which was very human and pathetic. The coming separation from them cast its shadow over Him, and made Him more solicitous than ever for their faith, and courage, and obedience. His works were richer and wider in their range of meaning than they had ever been before, and the hallowed atmosphere of the occasion heightened their impressiveness. He spoke of the Father, of Heaven, of fellowship with Himself when He should be no more seen, of prayer in His name, of His oneness with the Father. The whole scene, with the wonderful, heavenly talk of Christ, flowing like a river of life, was one of unearthly serenity and inspiration. The disciples feel it to be so. Their hearts were kindled. There was much they did not understand, but they

were none the less awed and filled with reverence and love. As they listened to the tones of that voice uttering the highest truths of the soul and eternity, and looked into that face so full of love and moral perfection, and looked around them upon the signs of the Passover Feast, they were filled with a new joy, and, for the time, they had a new vision of the greatness of Christ. They exclaimed, "Now we believe that Thou camest forth from God." "We know Thee now to be one from heaven. We see now that Thou art greater than the Baptist, or Elias, or the Prophets." It was a moment of inspiration and faith in their lives.

But Christ sees beyond the passing hour. He looks out into the dark, searching hour of trial that is so soon to overtake them, and He knows how they will fail under it. "Do ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone." It was not that they had no faith and love at all. Christ knew that they did believe in Him and love Him, but He saw that they were weak, and when the strain came upon them they would not be able to bear it. While they were with Him and He was opening His heart to them as He had never done before, while the brightness and peace of



that upper room were around them, while they dreamed not of approaching peril and conflict, they could exclaim, "We believe in Thee." But when the scenes of Gethsemane, and the Hall of Caiaphas, and Pilate's Tribunal, and Calvary came, they would be like frightened, bewildered, shepherdless sheep. True, ye are believing now, but ere long ye will be scattered every man to his own; and, as Christ had said, so it occurred. The hour of betrayal and capture startled the disciples out of their courage and fidelity, and they all forsook Him and fled.

There are, in human life, transitions from circumstances that are congenial to religious character, to circumstances that severely test it. A man should have a love to Christ that is strong enough to sustain him not alone in the "upper room," but also in the rough, adverse storms of life.

I.—There is the change from a time of inspiration, to the absence of inspiration. As there is a tidal ebb and flow in the ocean, so there is an ebb and flow of the energies and life of the human mind and spirit. The thinker, poet, philosopher, historian feels this. At one time he is full of power and his work is a joy to him. He is lifted into a pure and lustrous atmosphere. It is a time of open, clear vision with him,

when he can write, or sing, or philosophise without strain or painful effort. The quick thoughts stream in upon him, and the world around unfolds its truths and lessons to him. At another time all is changed. The light fades, and he gropes painfully and with difficulty over his work. This is even more true of the higher life of the spirit. At one time spiritual power flows in upon a man. The Divine realities come home to him with solemn impressiveness. His love to God burns as an illuminating, purifying fire in his heart. The higher nature is in the ascendancy, and evil dispositions and moral weaknesses are easily controlled. Temptations have lost much of their force. A Divine calm and strength fill the soul. In such an hour it is no great task to love and follow Christ. But the season of inspiration fades away. The heavens recede out of sight. The cold, dark night of trial and temptation gathers around us. We are no longer on the mount, but down in the weary, monotonous plain. Life is a battle once more. It is then that the reality of a man's faith in Christ is tested, and it is then that many a man fails. There is the faith of the hallowed hour of inspiration, when Divine influences enter like a flood into the spirit, and there is the far

more difficult and, therefore, nobler faith of the hour when the spirit is dull and void of inspiration.

II.—There are times of seclusion from the tempting outside world, and times of contact with the world.

III.—There are occasions when Christian character is honoured and esteemed, and occasions when a man must suffer for righteousness' sake.

IV.—There are seasons of Christian fellowship, and seasons when a man is deprived of fellowship.

There should be faith in Christ and obedience to His truth, not only in the happy, peaceful atmosphere of the Upper Room, but also in the time of peril, and suffering, and loneliness. "He that *endureth* to the *end* shall be saved."

THOMAS HAMMOND.

WOODFORD.

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### Acts i. 12.

(*The Ascension Day.*)

"THEN RETURNED THEY UNTO JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT CALLED OLIVET, WHICH IS FROM JERUSALEM A SABBATH DAY'S JOURNEY."

READING anew these familiar words, we are led at this time to enquire *what the scene of our*

*Lord's Ascension suggests about our own higher life.* For whether the scene be, as Bishop Ellicott and most expositors agree, Mount Olivet, or, as Dean Stanley and some others think, an upland between Olivet and Bethany, either locality equally suggests the place in its association with—

I.—PRAYER. Olivet stands as the very symbol of Christ's prayers. How fitting that from the scene of His devotions He should finally ascend to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. And is not prayer the mount from which the soul ascends to the higher life of communion and service even here. Every true prayer is a Mount of Olives to the soul. We think of the place in its association with—

II.—FRIENDSHIP. From an upland near Bethany Jesus ascended into Heaven. Now Bethany was the home of Lazarus, Martha, Mary; and these Jesus loved. They were the friends of Him who was almost friendless, their's was a home for Him who was almost homeless. From the scene of friendship He ascended. So where there is true commerce of thought, and intercourse of emotion, we watch the soul on her ascent to God. Every genuine friendship is a Mount of Olives. We think of the place in its association with—

III.—SORROW. The grave of Lazarus was not far off, and there "Jesus wept." In view of that place of tears He ascended. So our sorrows are often on mountains of ascension; and even when we do not rise, we find "a tear the telescope through which we see furthest into the heavens of truth and fact." We think of the place in its association with—

IV.—COMPASSION. It was on a ridge of the mountain, from whose crest probably He now ascended, that Jesus had been transfixed with the emotion of compassion for the city at its base. There He cried, "O Jerusalem," &c. And from the scene where once He, with patriot's and philanthropist's strongest passion, had been overcome with emotion, He now rose to Heaven. So compassionate sacrifice is ever a mount of ascension to the soul; for "he that loseth his life shall find it. We think of the place in its association with—

V.—RESIGNATION. At the foot of the hill was there the brook and the garden for ever memorable as the scene of His strange struggle and sublime resignation, "Father, not as I will," &c. Our hours of truest resignation are the hours in which our souls reach their loftiest destiny, breathe their purest air, are nighest to God.

EDITOR.

### John ix. 4.

(*The Sunday after Ascension.*)

"I MUST WORK THE WORKS OF HIM THAT SENT ME, WHILE IT IS DAY: THE NIGHT COMETH, WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK."

THE natural division of Time into Day and Night fulfils not only physical but moral ends. It utters a spiritual message, it conveys spiritual impressions. The Great Teacher who interpreted for man the voices of birds, of harvest-fields, of flowers, has also here, and elsewhere, interpreted the Voice of Night. Among other great facts of which night speaks to us, Jesus says it tells of Death. So He heard it speak, and so He repeats what He heard from its strangely silent voice.

Reflecting on some of the analogies between Death and Night, we notice that Death like Night—

I.—IS CERTAIN. Night is certain, however unlikely its approach sometimes seems in the brightness of some Midsummer noon.

"All men think all men mortal but themselves."

But when we remember that all the human race down to this generation is dead, that every wave but two of the great ocean of life has broken on the shores of death, that all history is a narrative of those who are now dead, that all our

houses (almost) were once inhabited by those who are now dead, that our living bodies are ever tending towards dissolution and decay, we feel that just as every day is wheeling to the West to be buried in the great grave of Night, so the life of every one of us is hastening to Death. Death like Night—

II.—BRINGS CHANGE OF SCENE AND OF OCCUPATION. The civ. Psalm supplies a beautiful picture of the change that comes over animal life at night, "Thou makest darkness," &c., and it supplies an equally beautiful suggestion concerning human life, "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening." But even where ordinary work ends at eventide, evening and night do not end life. The stream rolls on, though in another course.

"To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay,  
there's the rub,  
For in that sleep of death what  
dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal  
coil,  
Must give us pause."

Whatever be the scenes and occupations of the state to which death introduces us, it is clear that much we see now and can do now will have vanished, and will have become impracticable then. Death like Night—

III.—IS A PERIOD OF DANGER AND PERIL TO SOME. The absence

of danger is surely part of the burden of the promise concerning the world, of which it is said, "There shall be no night there." Divine lips have said, "If any man walk in the night he shall stumble." Words fail to tell the peril of the night of death to those whose feet stumble on the dark mountains, without the light of the Word of God, the cross of Christ, the Spirit of light and love. Death like Night—

IV.—IS A TIME OF REST AND PEACE TO MANY. "The dews of the night heal the wounds of the day." So, to the good, death brings blessing. Then, as in the night when Peter slept, the doors of a darker prison, the chains of a harsher bondage than his will be opened and will be broken. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying, blessed," &c. There are, however, contrasts between death and night. Death is unlike night because there is—

I.—NO INDICATION OF ITS APPROACH TO MANY. Night gives indications of its approach. "There are two faces," some one has well said, "on the clock of time—one in the sky, where the hours are marked by the rising and the setting of the orbs of heaven, and the other on the earth, where the hours are marked by the opening and closing of the flowers." The chilliness, the obscurity, the hush of twilight, all

whisper solemnly, "the night cometh." So death gives indication of its approach to some, but not to all. There are many of whom it is true "their sun went down while it was day." Death is unlike night because there is—

II.—NO RETURN TO THE FORMER STATE. With many, one day is so monotonously like another, that after each night they seem to return to exactly what

they were, and what they were doing before. But it is not thus with death. It is the starting of a new era, the birth of a new epoch. Let us go forward to death in the spirit in which Jesus Christ went forward to His. He foresaw the night, and hence lived earnestly, lovingly, beneficently, in the ever-shortening day. "I must work," &c.

EDITOR.

### THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE DIVINE PURPOSES.

DR. DALE.

"That coarse conception of the Divine omnipotence which assumes that a Divine purpose is never obstructed or delayed, and that every Divine volition is immediately accomplished, receives no sanction either from the Jewish or the Christian Scriptures. It receives no sanction from those discoveries of God which are accessible through the physical universe and through the moral nature of man. It looks as though God did nothing at a single stroke, nothing by an immediate and irresistible exercise of mere force. It is His will that the summer should be beautiful with flowers, and that the autumn should bring the brown corn and the purple grapes; but flowers and grapes and corn are not commanded to appear suddenly, out of nothing; the Divine will accomplishes itself gradually and by processes extremely complex and subtle. The world itself came to be a fit home for our race as the result of a history extending over vast and awful tracts of time. God intended that it should become what it now is; but His intention was accomplished by the action, through age after age, of the immense forces which are under His control. 'Fire and hail, snow and vapour, and the stormy wind' have fulfilled His word. He gave a commission to millions upon millions of living creatures to build the limestone rocks. Through untold centuries vast forests grew and perished to form the coal measures. Volcanic eruptions, frost and heat, the slow movements of glaciers, the swift rush of rivers, have all had their work to do in bringing the earth, which is our home, into its present condition. This seems to be the Divine manner of working. The Divine purposes are not achieved suddenly. God 'fainteth not, neither is He weary.' Chaos, with all its confusions, is gradually being reduced to order; the great work is not completed yet; it will reach its term only when all things are finally summed up in Christ."

T. B. K.



## Breviaries.

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### The Great Invitation.

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"COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST."—*Matt. xi. 28.*

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THE Being who talks like this is either more or less than a man. I.—THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. "Ye that labour and are heavy laden." Many are the burdens that worry and oppress the human heart in this sinful world. (1) *The burden of sin.* (2) *The burden of weakness and infirmity.* (3) *The burden of unsatisfied desire.* (4) *The burden of doubt and mystery:* (a) From the Bible. (b) Providence. (c) Consciousness. (5) *The burden of worldly disappointment and sorrow.* The poetry of life turns to prose, this is sure to be felt as a heavy burden. II.—THE INVITATION GIVEN. "Come unto Me." (1) *He has perfect knowledge* of every case. (2) *He is able.* Though the invitation is limitless, He can meet the highest expectations of each. (3) *He is ready.* "Come." The world is challenged to accept a present blessing in III.—THE BLESSED PROMISE. "I will give you rest." Mark the words. He does not say "I will" lend, or sell, or hire, but "I will *give* you rest." God's favour comes neither by works nor merit. It is a *gift*, sovereign and free. God intends His gift of rest and peace to abide with His people. Jesus said, "My peace I leave with you." "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God."

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

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### The Highest Commerce.

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"BUY THE TRUTH, AND SELL IT NOT."—*Proverbs xxiii. 23.*

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By the word "truth" in this passage we are to understand that moral good which is the essence of religion, and which is so often recommended in Scripture as man's greatest gain. I.—THE IMPORTANCE OF ACQUIRING THE TRUTH. (1) We should make *diligent search* for it. (2) We should be willing to *sacrifice* and surrender all for it. (3) Again, truth *must be*

*obeyed* in order to be made our own. It is not when the truth is coldly discussed or talked about that it does good to a man, but when it is welcomed to the soul's intimacy and familiar trust. The key to the Temple of Truth is obedience, "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." II.—THE IMPORTANCE OF RETAINING THE TRUTH. "Sell it not." We should not part with it (1) *Because of its intrinsic value.* (2) *Because it does not rise and fall in value like other things.* The markets of this world are for ever fluctuating, &c. Truth is ever the same. It derives not its value from any mortal pedigree, but carries its own stamp of dignity through all the changes and vicissitudes of time. (3) *Because it can be appropriated or made our own as nothing else can.* "A man's life (well-being) consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Worldly goods are of no value to a man when the last hour comes. But true religion will go with him into adversity, into affliction, and will comfort him even in death. Therefore acquire it, and do not part with it for any price, or on any consideration.

WOOTTON BASSETT.

D. MORGAN.

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### A Startling Contrast.

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"YE ARE LIKE UNTO WHITED SEPULCHRES."—*Matt.* xxiii. 27.

"YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD."—2 *Corinthians* vi. 16.

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THESE are descriptions of humanity in different moral conditions; the highest and the lowest. Wider extremes of figure are scarcely possible. Yet they accurately picture bad and good men. There is in the conception—I.—DARKNESS IN CONTRAST WITH LIGHT. The tomb is dark, a land of darkness as of darkness itself; the temple is light, for there the Shekinah glows. Like the sepulchre, the sinful soul is dark in (1) *ignorance*, (2) *woe*. Like the temple, the Christly soul is light in (1) *intelligence*, (2) *blessedness*. There is in the conception—II.—CORRUPTION IN CONTRAST WITH PURITY. All description of the grave, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness, fails to indicate the foulness of a sinful human heart; similarly, all descriptions of the lustre that filled the Holy of Holies fails to indicate the brightness of the souls who "walk in light,"

who are "lights of the world." There is in the conception—III.—THE TOKENS OF THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL IN CONTRAST WITH THE TROPHIES OF THE VICTORY OF GOOD. Sin brought death into our world. The sepulchre is sin's monument. The temple is the meeting-place between God and man, the scene of God's special manifestation, as well as God's special regard. Thus sharp and wide is the contrast between the sinful soul over which evil reigns, and the holy life in which God dwells.

EDITOR.

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## The Supreme Advantages of Christian Progress.

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"WHEREFORE THE RATHER, BRETHREN, GIVE DILIGENCE TO MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE," &c.—2 *Peter* i. 10, 11.

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THE apostle had the most vivid realisation of spiritual and eternal realities. The facts which we shall all know when we wake up in eternity, were to him palpable and tangible. He saw clearly the supreme importance of religion, and exhorted the Members of the Church to concentrate all their energies on the great task of serving God and making their salvation sure. They must attend to the exhortation given in the preceding verses, and add grace to grace. Two facts are placed before them. I.—PROGRESS ENSURES SAFETY. "Make your calling and election sure." "Ye shall never fall." Compare this verse with a passage in the first epistle, chap. ii. verses 9, 10. The words, "calling" and "election," are nearly synonymous. II.—PROGRESS ENSURES AN ABUNDANT ENTRANCE INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Refer to *the ancient games*. The course, the regulations, the goal, the prize. The one who carefully observed the regulations and distanced all his competitors, was crowned amid shouts of rejoicing from the crowd of spectators. Refer to *the triumph of a Roman general* who had returned victorious from the wars. Refer to the *striking description in the Pilgrim's Progress* of the welcome to the heavenly city given to *Christian* and his companion. Are we working earnestly for God?

WILLENHALL.

JOSEPH SHENTON.

## Christ Unable to be Hid.

“HE COULD NOT BE HID.”—*Mark* vii. 24.

OUR Lord was apparently seeking a season of retirement. (1) *For His own sake.* Weary; exhausted; virtue gone out of Him, &c. Christ, with heated brow, Christ, with spent nerve, ached for privacy and rest. (2) *To prevent the undue excitement of the people.* He would deepen their thought, and lead on to their calmer enquiry and meditation, &c. But He could not be hid. We ask—I.—*Why* could not Jesus be hid? (1) Because of the *influence of His own character.* He was magnet, fragrance, light, &c. (2) Because of the *intensity of the needs of those who were around Him.* Take one example; the woman who came, appealed, argued, trusted. Who could be hid from a nature like hers? Let us learn lessons; First: Be *like Jesus here.* Seek necessary retirement; yet unselfishly give it up again. Second: Be *like those* from whom Jesus could not be hid. Earnest, eager, pertinacious. EDITOR.

## Sin's Progress.

“WHEN I SAW AMONG THE SPOILS A GOODLY BABYLONISH GARMENT,” &c.  
—*Joshua* vii. 21.

IN this verse we see the origin and growth of sin. I.—THE GLANCE. “I saw.” II.—THE GREED. “I coveted.” III.—THE GUILT. “I took.” *Another Outline* I.—THE EYE. “I saw.” II.—THE EMOTION. “I coveted.” III.—THE ERROR. “I took.”

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

## Sin's Progress and End.

“WHEN I SAW AMONG THE SPOILS,” &c.—*Joshua* vii. 21.

I.—THE HEAD. “I saw.” II.—THE HEART. “I coveted.” III.—THE HAND. “I took.” IV.—THE HURRY. “I hid them.” V.—THE HORROR. “Israel stoned him.” *Another outline.* I.—THE FASCINATION. “A . . . Babylonish garment,” &c. II.—THE FEELING. “I coveted.” III.—THE FELONY. “I took.” IV.—THE FEAR. “I hid them.” V.—THE FATE. “Israel stoned him.”

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

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### When Did our Lord Ascend ?

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"TAKE NOT HOLD OF ME, FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED UNTO THE FATHER, BUT GO UNTO MY BRETHREN, AND SAY TO THEM, I ASCEND," &c.—*John* xx. 17.

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MANY of the texts generally considered difficult are so, not so much on account of any difficulty in themselves, as because they contradict preconceived opinions, or because they cannot be harmonised with current interpretations of other Scripture statements, perhaps, in some cases, because harmony is (on *any* interpretation) impossible. The plain meaning of this text is, "*Detain Me not [they "took hold of His feet"—Matthew xxviii. 9.] for I am now about to ascend.*" St. John proceeds to record three "*manifestations*" of Christ (xxi. 1.), but *no ascension at the close* of those manifestations, as though he believed that, in the *intervals*, Christ was neither in Hades (*that* was left for ever at the resurrection), nor "*in some obscure lodging in Jerusalem,*" nor "*hovering between the two worlds,*" but *with the Father*. Let us examine other passages—

(a) The *earliest* account of the resurrection is in 1 Cor. xv. (little more than twenty years after). *No reference* to the ascension, but the appearance to Paul, *two years* after, is *counted with* the other five appearances. This agrees with the view that Christ ascended on the resurrection day.

(b) Turning next to Mark (the earliest Gospel) which certainly closes at xvi. 8. (the last twelve verses being a late appendix), we find no record of a resurrection, much less an ascension, but of an angelic message which was *not delivered* (xvi. 8). The end of this Gospel probably *lost*.



(c) In Matthew, one appearance to the Apostles (in Galilee), but no ascension.

(d) In Luke's Gospel an account, probably derived from Cleopas, of two appearances on the resurrection day, "toward evening," and an ascension *apparently on the same day*.

(e) In Luke's later account we have a statement of appearances during forty days, ending with an ascension (Acts i. 12).

(f) In John, an account of four appearances, but no ascension.

(g) In appendix to Mark (xvi. 9-20), compiled by some scribe who condenses, with a copy of St. Luke before him, and adds some doubtful traditions (vv. 16 and 17), the ascension is apparently on the resurrection day.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.—The two apostolic evangelists, Matthew and John, do not speak of any ascension *at the close of the appearances* of the risen Christ, and, *but for Luke*, we should conclude that He *ascended on the resurrection day* to the Father, and came forth *from* the Father to manifest Himself. Luke's first account seems to agree with this, and St. Paul's confirm it, but St. Luke (in his later account) followed a tradition which postponed the ascension to the end of forty days, and this tradition is not of sufficient authority to weigh against the others. This later tradition apparently singles out one of many ascensions as though it were the only one, and narrates a formal and final leave-taking which the other narrators know nothing of.

We conclude that Christ ascended from the grave to heaven, and descended many times between Easter and Pentecost to manifest Himself both in Judea, and Galilee, and (two years later) in Syria; but these space-terms, "*ascend*" and "*descend*," are vague, and represent a more direct manifestation than those after Pentecost (and to the end of the world), but the mode thereof we cannot understand.

HENRY C. LEONARD, M.A.

## Reviews.

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THE PARABLES OF JESUS; a Methodical Exposition. By SIEGFRIED GOEBEL. Translated by Professor Banks.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By DR. BERNHARD WEISS. Translated by M. G. Hope. Vol. II.

COMMENTARY ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM. By Rev. ALEXANDER WHYTE, D.D.

LESSONS ON THE LIFE OF JESUS. By Rev. WILLIAM SCRYMGEOUR. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38, George Street.

THE PARABLES OF JESUS. The parables of our Lord are, for many reasons, the most vitally significant and the most soul-attractive portions of the New Testament. They are the concrete Gospel, the Gospel addressed to the human eye, and ear, and heart, the Gospel which can be touched and handled. The pulpit which treats these parables with the most genius, intelligence, and piety, will not only be the most attractive, but also the most useful. Because of this, works that present the parables in new light, and exhibit them with the most suggestive force, will always be sought by earnest ministers of the Gospel. We have already many valuable modern works on the parables, such as those of Trench, Guthrie, Arnot, &c., but the one before us we consider *one* of the best, if not the best. It is very learned, but it is as suggestive as it is erudite.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Dr. Weiss. We have already called attention to the first volume of this great work. This second volume seems, in every way, equal to the first, and to justify the high judgment we pronounced. After all the works that have appeared on this great subject—some of which, such as Dr. Geikie's, are of priceless worth—this we think, in some respects, excels them all. The translation appears to be most faithful.

COMMENTARY ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM. In his prefatory note the author says: "The following pages possess somewhat more the character of a *Catena* than that of an original Commentary. In his pastoral work the author has repeatedly carried large Bible Classes through the Shorter Catechism, and part of his method has always been to elucidate and enliven the text by notes and illustrations taken from such writers of authority and distinction as were known to him. The results of this method of instruction have been such as to encourage the author to follow it in the compilation of the following pages." A most excellent exposition this of one of the best orthodox catechisms.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF JESUS. This also is a most valuable little work, consisting of lessons drawn from the life of Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

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THE OFFICIAL YEAR-BOOK OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, for 1884.  
London: S. P. C. K., Northumberland Avenue, Charing Cross.

This is a most valuable work not only for clergymen, but for laymen also. It is issued under the sanction of the Archbishops of Canterbury, York, Armagh, and Dublin; of the Primus of Scotland; and of the Bishops of the English, Irish, and Scottish Churches. Also formally sanctioned by the Lower House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, and published under the direction of a Representative Committee, by the Tract Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The following reports are new features in the volume:—A Statement with regard to Parochial Work; The Cathedral System; Sisterhoods; Convalescent Homes; Endowed Schools for the Middle Classes; Diocesan Organisations of Sunday Schools. Interesting records are also furnished of the Church in Ireland and Scotland, and a valuable summary of the work of the Episcopal Church in America.

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PROGRESSIVE RELIGION; Sermons from the MSS. of WILLIAM BATHGATE, D.D. Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, St. Vincent Street.

This book reminds us of many of those who were wont to write to the first editor of the *Homilist* in terms of highest commendation of this periodical, but who are gone. We think of the noble Dr. MacLeod, who wrote, "that the *Homilist* preached to him every month," of the brilliant Gilfillan, who wrote, "that the *Homilist* had no equal in any age," of the renowned Professor Lange, who declared the *Homilist* to be "the best serial of the kind in England," and of numerous other distinguished ministers and scholars who were wont to write in the same strain. Now the esteemed author of these sermons has gone over to the great majority. The volume consists of a Memoir, and also of Sermons, under the following titles:—"The Unchanging God; Christ the Great Treasury of Wisdom and Knowledge; The Word of God; The Bible of Providence; The Childlike Spirit and the Kingdom of God; Partakers of the Divine Nature; God seeking Man; Man seeking God; Opinions and Convictions; Progressive Religion; Whatsoever Things are True; A good Christian Conscience; Christian Manliness; Commercial Morality; Walking with God; Spiritual Advantages of Occasional Solitude; The Conversion of

Saul of Tarsus ; The In-door Kingdom ; Set Thine House in Order ; The God of Comfort ; Because I Live, Ye shall Live also ; The Temporal and the Eternal ; Not Yours but You ; The One New Man ; Concord with God ; Servants of Righteousness Friends of Christ ; The Enduring Kingdom." Mr. Bathgate was a man of thoughtfulness, conviction, catholicity, progress, and earnest devotion to Gospel truth and full of sympathy for souls.

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THE TRUCE OF GOD, AND OTHER POEMS. By WILLIAM STEVENS. London : C. Kegan Paul and Co.

These poems, which the author dedicates to his children, are of considerable merit, although "fragments of the busy years." Modestly he tells us they are not written in that—

"Perfect language of the spheres  
Where poets speak with words of fire."

This may be true, yet his productions are pleasant, profitable, and, in a high degree, poetical. The subjects chosen are poetic, whether descriptive and historical, or sentimental and allegorical. To recall any one poem is to revive some true thoughts, and to feel anew the uplifting powers of a worthy ideal. The pieces are chiefly historic. The poem which gives the title to the book, "The Truce of God," is founded upon the engagements entered into, in the eleventh century, by certain nobles, that their quarrels should end, and further, that they would protect the defenceless. "The Last Combat in the Coliseum," "Desert Worshippers," and "The Book that Cannot Die," are good poetical pictures, teaching valuable lessons. A very pleasantly written ballad is "Dick Willemzoon." The hero is a Protestant Dutchman, who saved the soldiers who were pursuing him from drowning, although his pitifulness cost him his life. "The Betrothed," and "The Portrait on the Easel," portray in fitly-chosen words the blessedness of Divine charity in service rendered for others without the thought of recompense or reward.

In general, Mr. Stevens' meaning is transparently clear ; we say in general, for his allegory, "The Giant of the Plains," will not be fully understood at one reading.

Some of the smaller poems have appeared in the *Leisure Hour* and *The Sunday at Home*, a guarantee of at least their religious tendency. If Mr. Stevens has other "Fragments" as good as these, he had better gather them up and let the world have them. The world will be the stronger and purer for breathing such inspirations of sacred song as Mr. Stevens can supply.

THE UNITY OF NATURE. By the DUKE OF ARGYLE. London : Alexander Strahan, Covent Garden.

This is the work of one who is conventionally called a "nobleman." It is not always that that order of human beings has much brain—indeed the conventional noblemen are often intellectually and morally ignoble—still less even that those with the greatest amount of brain employ their intellectual powers in deep thought and literary pursuits. Still more rare is it to find amongst those who even do that, any occupying their attention with the sublimest themes and the profoundest lines of discussion. This scholarly and talented work consists of thirteen chapters, the subjects of which are :—"General Definitions and Illustrations of the Unity of Nature ; Man's Place in the Unity of Nature ; Animal Instinct in its Relation to the Mind of Man ; The Limits of Human Knowledge ; The Truthfulness of Human Knowledge ; The Elementary Constitution of Matter in Relation to the Inorganic ; The Elementary Constitution of Matter in Relation to the Organic ; Man as the Representative of the Supernatural ; The Moral Character of Man ; The Degradation of Man ; The Nature and Origin of Religion ; The Corruptions of Religion ; Recapitulations and Conclusions." Though we cannot endorse all the opinions propounded herein, nor pronounce all the reasoning conclusive, or the language entirely free from verbosity, the volume, as a whole, is one of great value and distinguished merits. The theme is a grand one, and its treatment reveals a mind of rare quality ; eagle-eyed and eagle-pinioned, he sees far, and towers high into sunshine. The merits of this work claim for it a place in the best libraries of the world.

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ESSAYS AND LEAVES FROM A NOTE-BOOK. By GEORGE ELIOT. London and Edinburgh : Blackwood and Sons.

Who is not acquainted with the productions of George Eliot's pen, and who does not prize them as transcending in merit most of the literature of this or any other age ? They blend the deepest philosophy with the loftiest poetry, the most vigorous logic with the tenderest sympathies. In this volume we have essays entitled, "Worldliness and Other—Worldliness—the poet Young," which appeared in the *Westminster Review*, 1857 ; "German Wit—Heinrich Heine," *Westminster Review*, 1856 ; "Evangelical Teaching—Dr. Cumming," *Westminster Review*, 1855 ; "The Influence of Rationalism—Lecky's History," *Fortnightly Review*, 1865 ; "The Natural History of German Life—Riehl," *Westminster Review*, 1856 ; "Three Months in Weimar," *Fraser's Magazine*, 1855 ; "Address to Working Men, by Felix Holt," *Blackwood's Magazine*, 1868 ; "Leaves



from a Note-Book," consisting of passages on "Authorship, Fragments on Authors, Story-telling, Historic Imagination, Value in Originality, To the Prosaic all Things are Prosaic, Dear Religion's Love, We make our own Precedents, Birth of Tolerance, Felix qui non potuit, Divine Grace a Real Emanation, A Fine Excess, Feeling is Energy." From the article entitled "*Evangelical Teaching*," we quote the following passage, which, alas! is applicable to many of the occupants of the modern pulpit:—

*"Given a man with moderate intellect, a moral standard not higher than the average, some rhetorical affluence and great glibness of speech, what is the career in which, without the aid of birth or money, he may most easily attain power and reputation in English society? Where is that Goschen of mediocrity in which a smattering of science and learning will pass for profound instruction, where platitudes will be accepted as wisdom, bigoted narrowness as holy zeal, unctuous egoism as God-given piety? Let such a man become an Evangelical preacher: he will then find it possible to reconcile small ability with great ambition, superficial knowledge with the prestige of erudition, a middling morale with a high reputation for sanctity. . . . He has an immense advantage over all other public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of hisses and groans. Counsel for the plaintiff expects the retort of counsel for the defendant. The honourable gentleman on one side of the House is liable to have his facts and figures shown up by his honourable friend on the opposite side. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience slip quietly out one by one. But the preacher is complete master of the situation, no one may hiss, no one may depart. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him; he may exercise perfect free-will in logic and invent illustrative experience: he may give an Evangelical edition of history, with the inconvenient facts omitted: all this he may do with impunity, certain that those of his hearers who are not sympathising are not listening."*

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A POPULAR INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. By  
 Rev. S. G. CUPPEN. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 38, George Street

This work, we are informed by the Author, has been written to supply a want in popular theological literature. He says he does not "appeal to professed students, or to readers able to appreciate the scholarly works of Hagenbach, Shedd, and Cunningham. But there are many Sunday School Teachers, Village Preachers, &c., who have a fair general acquaintance with the leading facts of the Church's external history, and yet have not, and know not where to obtain more than the vaguest notion of the devel-

opment of the Church's creed. The popular manuals of Church history, almost without exception, assume tacitly, or openly, that their author's personal or sectarian creed was that of the Apostolic age: and the whole history of doctrine is, for them, a record of the defence or perversion of this cherished system. The present work, on the contrary, aims at strict impartiality: and, although it is, perhaps, impossible that any treatise of the kind should be theologically colourless, the writer deems himself to have failed of his purpose wherever he has departed from a neutral attitude, or betrayed his own doctrinal or ecclesiastical opinions."

This work will prove highly valuable, not only to those who have not larger volumes on the subject, and cannot afford to purchase them on account of their costliness, but even to those who possess more voluminous works, because here they have a bird's-eye view of the whole field.

THOUGHTS ON SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORICAL PLAYS. By HON. ALBERT CANNING. London: W. Hadlen & Co., Waterloo Place.

The plays of our great dramatist, which are here selected for examination and reflection, are the following:—Julius Cæsar; Antony and Cleopatra; Macbeth; King John; King Richard II.; King Henry IV.; King Henry V.; King Henry VI.; King Richard III.; King Henry VIII. The observations which the Author makes on these plays show that he has studied them thoroughly, and that his acquaintance with them is so enlightened that he is one of the best guides we have to conduct us through all the rich fields of thought which the prince of dramatists has spread out in the creations of his magnificent genius. He has availed himself of the judgments of our very best Shaksperian critics, ancient and modern, such as Courtenay, Dowden, Furnival, Guizot, Dr. Johnson, C. Knight, Howard Staunton, Scholefel, and Bishop Wordsworth. He who will read thoughtfully the remarks of the author on the various plays we have mentioned, will become qualified to enter into their study with a zest for the relishment of their rich clusters of fruit.

TRAVELLERS' TALK ON ENGLAND'S CRISIS. By SAMUEL WAINWRIGHT, D.D. London: Hatchards, Piccadilly.

This book prefaces to be a Report of imaginary conversations of imaginary members of an imaginary club called the Travellers' Club. The subjects of those conversations, although numerous and varied, relate to England's crisis. There are rays of exciting intelligence, and flashes of sparkling wit on almost every page, and the tone of the whole is healthy and progressive.



*The*  
*Leading Homily.*

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VOICES AND VISIONS FROM ETERNITY.

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"I WAS IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY, AND HEARD BEHIND ME A GREAT VOICE, AS OF A TRUMPET, SAYING, I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE FIRST AND THE LAST: AND, WHAT THOU SEEST, WRITE IN A BOOK, AND SEND IT UNTO THE SEVEN CHURCHES WHICH ARE IN ASIA; UNTO EPHEBUS, AND UNTO SMYRNA, AND UNTO PERGAMOS, AND UNTO THYATIRA, AND UNTO SARDIS, AND UNTO PHILADELPHIA, AND UNTO LAODICEA," &c.—*Revelation* ii. 10-17.

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**C**ONCERNING this vision, and, indeed, nearly all the visions recorded in this Apocalypse, there are three facts to be predicated at the outset. First: It is *mental*. What is here reported as heard and seen by John, was not seen by his bodily eye, or heard by his bodily ear. It was, I consider, a purely mental vision. It is one of the characteristic attributes and distinctions of man that he can see and hear objects that come not within the range of his senses. Though the eagle is reported to have a keen and far-reaching eye, and has borne its pinions into the region of sunny azure, it has no glimpse of the spirit domain; whereas a man who may be even sightless and deaf, has the power of seeing wonderful things and hearing wonderful things. The sightless bard of England lived in a bright world; his genius bore him aloft into regions where there was no cloud. These mental

visions are of two classes, the voluntary and the involuntary. The former are the productions of creative genius, the latter are those dreams of the night when deep sleep falls on man. Mental visions are not *necessarily illusions*. They are often more real than those of the physical, they come farther into the depths of our being, and convey to us impressions of things of which material phenomena are but the effects and expressions. Concerning this vision, notice—Secondly: It is *credible*. Had it been reported that John saw with the *outward* eye, and heard with the *outward* ear the things here reported, the report could not have been believed. The objects are so unique, so incongruous with all that is natural, so grotesque, and, we may say, so monstrous and unæsthetic, that we could not believe a man who said he saw them with his outward eye. A being "*clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" Who could believe a man who said he beheld these with his bodily eye? But as a mental vision it is credible enough. What grotesque shapes appear to us in dreams, what strange monstrosities rise to our mental eye! The deities that arose out of the imagination of Nineveh, Greece, and India, and throughout the whole domain of heathendom, were as unnatural and incoherent in their forms as the aspects of the *Son of Man* before us. The reports of mental visions, however extraordinary, are credible, men believe in them. Concerning this vision—Thirdly: It is *symbolic*. It has a deep spiritual meaning, it adumbrates mighty lessons, it is a picture of eternal realities. What are the great truths here symbolised? That a wonderful voice from eternity comes to man, a wonderful personage from eternity appears to man, and wonderful impressions from eternity are made upon man. Notice—

I.—That a wonderful VOICE from eternity COMES to man. "I



*was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*" We are told also that the voice that came to John was "*as the sound of many waters.*" The spiritual condition of John when the voice came is worthy of note. He was "*in the spirit.*" This means, I trow, something more than being in the spirit in a moral sense, in the spirit of heavenly loyalty and devotion. In this condition all true men are, they are led by the spirit, they walk by the spirit. It is being in an elevated state of mind, a kind of ecstasy in which a man is lifted out of himself, in which, like Paul, he is taken up to heaven, and sees and hears things unutterable. He was in such a condition as this at a certain period here called "*the Lord's day.*" All men who are in the spirit in the moral sense, in the sense of vital godliness, feel and regard all days as "*the Lord's day.*" But the days of spiritual ecstasies and transports are ever special. Perhaps the first day of the week is here referred to, the day of our Saviour's resurrection from the dead. Probably the association of that wonderful day served to raise his soul into this ecstatic state. Concerning the voice that came to him when in this state, it was marked by two things—

First: The voice was marked by clearness. "*A great voice, as of a trumpet.*" The voice was clear, loud, strong, as a trumpet. It was a voice to which he could not close his ears if he wished to, its clarion notes rang into him.

Secondly: The voice was marked by fulness. "*As the sound of many waters.*" "Daniel described the voice of the Ancient of Days as the voice of a multitude (Dan. x. 6): but the voice of the multitude was in earlier Hebrew writings compared to the sound of the waves of the sea, which the voice of the Lord could alone subdue (Ps. lxxv. 7; xciii. 4.). This image the evangelist adopts to describe the voice of Christ, strong and majestic amid the Babel sounds of earth. That voice whose word stilled the sea sounds as the waves of the sea which St. John heard Him rebuke." Is there any voice in nature equal to the voice of the old ocean, majestic, full, continuous, drowning all other sounds? The clamour and the din of a thousand armies on the shore are lost amidst the roar of the incoming waves.



Such was the voice that came to John from eternity, and such a voice comes to all men in every condition and in every age, clear and full, bearing messages to the soul from the great Father of spirits. True, clear, full, and continuous though that voice be, it is only heard by those who, like John, are "*in the spirit*," whose spirits are alive and elevated with the real and the Divine. Notice—

II.—That a wonderful PERSONAGE from eternity APPEARS to man. "*Like unto the (a) Son of Man.*" Christ was indeed the Son of Man, not the son of a tribe or of a class, but the son of humanity, free from all national peculiarities, tribal idiosyncracies, or ecclesiastical predilections. Observe here two things—

First: The *scene* of the appearance. "*In the midst of the seven candlesticks.*" The seven Churches, viz.: those of "*Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea,*" are here represented as "*golden candlesticks,*" they are precious lights, they bear and diffuse the light of God. Why these seven Churches are here selected and addressed rather than other Churches, of which there were several, some more important than these, such as the Church at Corinth, Thessalonica, &c., I know not. It might have been because they had in their combination all those excellencies and defects, needs and duties, which together represent the universal Church, the Church of all times and lands. It was in these Churches, these "*candlesticks,*" that the "*Son of Man*" now appeared to John. He who would see Christ must look for Him in true Churches, the communions of holy men. Observe—

Secondly: The *characteristics* of the appearance. Mark the description. He was "*clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle,*" a long, ample robe of regal authority. "*His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.*" Does the white hair indicate decay? It frequently does so with us. Snowy locks are at once the sign and consequence of declining strength. Not so with Him. He is "*the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*" "*Fire,*" says *Trench*, "*at its highest intensity is white, the red in fire is of the earth, earthy, it implies something which the fire has not yet*

thoroughly subdued, while the pure flame is absolutely white. This must be kept in mind whenever we read of white as the colour and livery of heaven." "*His eyes were as a flame of fire.*" Eyes that penetrate into the deepest depth of the soul, discern moral distinctions, and burn with a holy indignation at the wrong. "*His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace.*" This indicates strength at once enduring and resistless. "*He had in His right hand seven stars.*" These seven stars represent, it is supposed, the chief pastors of the seven Churches. An ideal pastor is a moral star, catching and reflecting the light of the Sun of Righteousness. "*Out of his mouth went (proceeded) a sharp two-edged sword.*" This is the word of the truth, elsewhere called the "sword of the spirit," quick and powerful, &c. The sword by which Christ fights His moral battles and wins His moral conquests is not the sword of steel, but the sword of truth. "*His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" "Of the angel by the vacant tomb it is said, his countenance was like lightning (Matt. xxviii. 3); here the countenance of the Lord is compared to the sun at its brightest and clearest, in the splendour of this highest noon, no veil, no mist, no cloud obscuring its brightness."

Here then is the wonderful personage which has appeared to us, the children of men, from eternity. Though He is "*the Son of Man*," thoroughly human, He has an attitude and aspect that is superhuman. His voice clear as a "*trumpet*," and full as an ocean, His regal robes girt with a "*golden girdle*," His "*hair white as snow*," radiating effulgent purity, His feet strong as "*brass*," His hand clasping "*seven stars*," His mouth flashing out a "*two-edged sword*," and His countenance luminous as the "*sun in his strength*." What manner of man is this! The symbolical representation here indicates (1) *royalty*. He is robed as a king, "*clothed with a garment to the feet*." Christ was a royal Man in the truest and highest sense; royal in thought, sympathy, aim, character. The representation indicates (2) *purity*. His brow encircled with locks white as snow. "*His head and His hairs were like wool*." The only morally spotless Man the race has ever known. The representation indicates (3) *penetration*.

His eyes pierced into the deepest depths of human thought; they were "*as a flame of fire.*" The representation indicates (4) *firmness*. There was no vacillation of purpose, but inflexible and invincible. "*His feet like unto fine brass.*" The representation indicates (5) *dominion*. Having the brightest and purest intelligences in His possession and at His command. "*He had in His right hand seven stars.*" The representation indicates (6) *victory*. His victories are bloodless. He conquers mind, He slays not existence, but its curses and its wrongs. "Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword." The representation indicates (7) *brightness*. No dark thoughts clouding His brow indicating anger or sadness, but bright looks withal. "*His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*" This man was the greatest gift of heaven to the race. In Him dwelleth not only all the fulness of what is purest and grandest in human nature, but all "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Notice—

III.—That a wonderful IMPRESSION from eternity is MADE upon man. "*And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as (one) dead.*" It is a physiological fact that a sudden rush of strong emotions will stop the heart and arrest the current of life in its flow. What were John's emotions? Was there *amazement*? Was he amazed at seeing One whom he loved above all others, and with whom he had parted, some thirty years before, on the Mount of Olives, when a cloud received Him out of sight, now in forms sublimely unique and overwhelmingly majestic? Was it *dread*? Was he terror-struck at the marvellous apparition? Was it *remorse*? Did the effulgence of its purity quicken within him such a sense of guilt as filled him with self-loathing and horror? I know not. Perhaps all these emotions blended in a tidal rush that physically paralysed him for awhile. When Isaiah, in the Temple, saw the Lord on high and lifted up, he exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am undone." When Job heard the voice speaking out of the whirlwind, he exclaimed, "I abhor myself in dust and ashes." When Christ appeared to Peter, he cried out, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." When the Roman ruffians, in the garden of Gethsemane, saw the moral majesty on His brow, and heard His words, such emotions rushed into them.

as stopped their hearts, and they "went backward and fell to the ground." Eternity is constantly making solemn impressions upon man. In most cases, perhaps, the impressions are superficial and fugitive, but frequently in certain seasons and conditions of life they are terrible beyond description. There are but few men who have not felt at times something of the moral terrors of Eliphaz. "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me and trembling which made all my bones to shake." No impressions, however, from eternity are so deep and salutary as those conveyed to the heart by profound meditations on the doctrines, the history, and the character of Christ. Such impressions are the means by which the all-loving Father renews the moral character of His children and makes them meet for His everlasting fellowship and service.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

[NOTE.—This Homily is as sketchy as possible in order to economise space, and promote thought.]

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THE ATONEMENT.—"Every year and day convinces me more that our preaching will be good for nothing if the main subject of it is not the atonement of God with man in Christ; if we may not proclaim His sacrifice as a finished work; if we may not ground all our sacrifices upon it; if we stop short of the eucharistic proclamation that God of His tender mercy hath given us His Son to be a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. Any notions, theories, practices which interfere with the fulness of this Gospel deprive men, it seems to me, of a blessing which has been bestowed upon them, and to which they have a right; deprive them of the only effectual foundation for social and individual reformation."—F. D. MAURICE.



## Germes of Thought.

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### Temptation and Spiritual Growth.

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"AND JESUS, WHEN HE WAS BAPTIZED, WENT UP STRAIGHTWAY OUT OF THE WATER: AND, LO, THE HEAVENS WERE OPENED UNTO HIM, AND HE SAW THE SPIRIT OF GOD DESCENDING LIKE A DOVE, AND LIGHTING UPON HIM: AND LO A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, SAYING, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. THEN WAS JESUS LED UP OF THE SPIRIT INTO THE WILDERNESS TO BE TEMPTED OF THE DEVIL."—*Matt.* iii. 16, 17; iv. 1.

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It is a pity that in the division of the Biblical writings into chapters this narrative was so unwisely cleft in twain. It would have been much better had the division been made at the close of the account of the Temptation, for the events of these fierce and lonely forty days in the wilderness were the natural and necessary consequence of the experience on the banks of the Jordan.

In the brief story of these chapters there are two scenes which stand out in sharp and suggestive contrast. On the one hand there is the great crowd, composed of the disciples of the Baptist, and of those who had been attracted to him by his weird manner and uncommon message; there is the rugged preacher of repentance, who, though he feared God regarded not man, treating with mingled scorn and sarcasm the Jewish aristocracy, and in his thundering and heroic way denouncing their crime and hypocrisy; there is his submission as he recognizes, by the force of his spiritual instinct, the superiority of One who seemed to others to be but a stranger and an ordinary man; and there is the Stranger's sublimer recognition as, through the opened heavens, there rolled the declaration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And, then, on the other hand the "Stranger" is alone: the Spirit which has descended upon Him has led Him away from



the clamour and excitement of men into the wilderness, there to be tried and tempted of the devil. Such is the startling experience which follows immediately on His Divine acceptance and recognition. He has received the baptism of water, now He must receive the baptism of fire. He has been claimed as God's Son, now He must prove Himself worthy of the Father who hath sent Him. And this was not the only time in the life of Christ when a great exaltation was followed by trial. The baptism at the Jordan and the temptation in the wilderness are the significant foreshadowing of His history.

And not only of Christ's; of ours also. In every human life the light and the darkness follow each other swiftly. Every man who has heeded the call to repent, and who has heard the Divine voice saying concerning him, "This My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased," knows what it is to be "led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." The experience of men bears witness to the experience of Christ. The life of humanity is one of contrasted and conflicting moods, of joy and sorrow, of hope and fear, of inspirations and struggles that border on despair, of Divine benedictions and agonizing conflicts in the wilderness with sin.

Taking, therefore, these two scenes as being a representation of the experience of both Christ and men, we come to a subject of deep and practical interest, viz. :—THE RELATION OF TEMPTATION AND OF THE VARIED MOVEMENTS OF OUR LIFE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

It is a law which runs through all existence that there is no progress that is steady, constant, and unvarying; no movement forward that has not its backward action also.

Nature supplies us with innumerable illustrations of it. The old promise that "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease"—never fails of its fulfilment. The years are set to their varying movements, and in the arrangement of the seasons nature finds its rise and fall. So with all the aspects in which the outer world is known to us. The operations of the Everlasting and Unchangeable God are not

distinguished by an everlasting and unchangeable monotony. From the sides of the fairest valleys spring the frowning hills, that seem as if they were only meant to be the hiding places of birds and beasts of prey: the soft winds of summer, that gently fan a child to sleep, are but the whisperings of the hurricanes that lay the oaks of the forest low; vast territories are slowly subsiding into the bosom of the great deep, and others just as slowly emerging; whilst the ever-heaving sea, which is perpetually encroaching, is also perpetually giving up its dead. The order of the world is not one unbroken sameness: in the mould of variety all things are cast.

The illustrations of this law afforded by our personal experience are none the less vivid. If we take, for example, the experience of business, it will require, surely, but little elaboration to shew that in all its varying branches the law of alternation finds the most distinct expression. There are departments in which the changes can be measured and foretold; in others they are more irregular, depending on unforeseen conditions, but they are not the less certain. This mingling of contraries runs through all our history. The scenery of a human life, like the scenery of nature, has its fertile plains, its grim ravines, its bleak and barren hills. Now it is bathed in the sunlight of a great joy, again it is overcast and saddened by the sorrows whose memory will never fade. Pleasure and pain, expectancy and depression, endeavour and exhaustion make up the warp and woof out of which is woven the diversified web of our human life.

But, especially, are the operations of this law visible in our spiritual experience. There are times when we march steadily, when there is no interruption to our growth and no apparent discord in the harmony of our life. It seems to us, then, as if we had been made the subjects of a special baptism of the Holy Ghost. Our spiritual sensibilities are quickened, our faith becomes more firm, our love more passionate and deep. We are lifted above the low-level life we are frequently content to lead. The easily besetting sin is shorn of its fascination; temptation finds no answer in our desire; we stand above its enchantment and above its defilement also. Our life is at its best—rich,

buoyant, abounding with glorious hopes—and, with our hearts uplifted and inspired, we are heedless of the reaction that will set in, of the opposition that will have to be encountered. And then, even whilst the glory is upon us, we begin to move towards the wilderness where we find, only too often, that our exalted mood has become one of the possessions of the past. The brightness of our dream has faded; the day has darkened; the light we had been following has gone out! Through processes which sometimes we understand, but, perhaps, oftener do not, we find that our strength is exhausted, and that our love lies bruised and broken on the ruins of our will. It does not require a long experience to convince us that our exalted states are but transient, and that we swiftly emerge from the state where we walk, as it were, in the light of God's countenance, and enter upon the under or shaded side of it, where we have to walk by faith, not by sight.

No aspect of our spiritual life is permanent. Our sun, though it covers us with joy in its upward way, soon reaches its meridian, and then it takes the westward slant, and the shadows fall, and the night rests upon us until the dawn of another day. Even the enthusiasm which takes possession of a man when he first realizes what is meant by the mercy of God in Christ—an enthusiasm which changes the face of the world to him, as it makes all things new, soon subsides into a quality that does not look very much like love. There is no spiritual condition in which we can linger long. With a heart overflowing with gladness we ascend to the gates of heaven with our thanksgiving, yet we speedily descend again, and, sometimes, go down into such a loneliness and helplessness that we forget where we have descended from, and then, with our eyes blinded by our sorrow and the memory of our joy grown dim, we long to turn

“Into our yesterdays, and wander back  
To distant childhood, and go out to God  
By the gate of birth, not death.”

There is an instructive parable on the movements of our spiritual life given us in the movements of the sea. You may have gone down to the shore when the tide has been at the flood,

and the water has glittered and sparkled in the sunlight, and the racing billows have floundered upon each other as they have hurried to their bourn; and you have gone down to the same point a few hours later when the tide has ebbed, and when in place of the wide expanse of heaving and swelling water there has been only a dreary, dismal, and apparently endless reach of sand. So it is in our spiritual experience! The tide of joy and prosperity sweeps back again, leaving behind it a desolation that would be "more desolate than death," were it not that we know it will return again, and in returning reach somewhat farther than the last.

From this alternating movement in the deeper regions of our life none of us is exempt. And because of it we sooner or later learn to measure our experience less by the years through which we live than by the rise and fall of our feeling and our faith, and our spiritual progress less by the brilliant movements of our joy than by the struggles in which we have engaged, and the moral victories we have won.

And, now, why is it that God has so arranged our life that the baptism by the Jordan must be followed by the temptation in the wilderness, and that in the moods of nature we find the correspondence to the moods of our own souls? It may be that for the full and complete answer to that question we shall have to wait until we reach the light that makes all mystery plain; a partial answer, however, we may obtain even here and now.

IT REQUIRES NO GREAT POWER OF DISCERNMENT TO RECOGNISE THAT THE EXPERIENCE WHICH ANSWERS TO THE WILDERNESS IS NECESSITATED BY THE MORAL FREEDOM WE POSSESS. The dignity of man lies in the power he has to mould his life, to create his purposes, to restrain and educate his affections, to gravitate towards God by the free exercise of his will. And what does that mean for him but difficulty, trouble, perplexity, temptation? What is it but the struggle in which he must engage before he can realize his strength, the wilderness he must cross before he can enter his promised land? Were it otherwise; were it impossible that he could be disturbed by any allurements of the world, that an evil suggestion could confront and shake him, and that his soul could



be convulsed in lonely conflicts, it is true that he could never know the misery of defeat, but it is also true that he would never know the joy of victory, and the self control which is born of strife. If the element of temptation be taken from his life, and his experience be everlastingly smooth and even, untroubled by doubts and suggestions that bewilder; if he follow in the track of the Almighty will as surely, and as helplessly, as the planets sweep along their invisible grooves, he may be a tool in the hands of inflexible destiny, but he will not be a man fashioned after the image of God. He would be obedient because disobedience would be impossible; he would never be wicked because he could never be righteous; he would never love because he could never hate; he would see no virtue in goodness and no dishonour in crime. Assuredly, he would be without temptation, but he would also be without character, without freedom, and all that makes the praise and prayer of a human heart acceptable unto God!

But not only is it one of the necessary conditions of our power of moral choice; IT IS ALSO THE DIVINELY APPOINTED MEANS OF OUR SPIRITUAL GROWTH. In the words which preface the temptation of Christ, we are told that, "Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; not of the spirit of evil—that never could lead Him—but of the Spirit of God. At the first sight it appears somewhat incongruous that the Spirit of God should have anything to do with the wilderness, and especially incongruous that the Spirit of God should lead Christ into it to be tempted of the devil; for the wilderness is usually regarded as a place which God has either blighted or forgotten, and it is distinctly stated that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." The incongruity, however, arises from our judgment concerning "increase," from which the idea of progress through temptation and solitude, is only too frequently eliminated. The common idea of increase is that of direct addition—something distinctly added to our possessions, and nothing subtracted therefrom: whereas the true idea is that of development—the slow and gradual augmentation which often appears to be interrupted. In that development the "evil demon"



plays an important part. It is, in fact, the chief element, without which there can be neither a strong nor healthful manhood. To be severed from the experience of the wilderness is, in no fanciful or shadowy sense, to be severed from a vital and enduring relation to God. It is quite true that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man," yet it is equally true that He cannot bestow His Spirit upon a man, or enter into his life so as to enlarge and enrich it, and rouse into activity his slumbering capacities, without bringing him into that state from which he is "led up into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." The baptism of the Jordan, with its weird yet sublime corollary of the temptation in the wilderness, is the true order of every noble Christian life! It may seem strange to us that immediately after God has revealed Himself to a human soul, He should, as it were, withdraw Himself, yet that withdrawal is necessary if the vision is to control or influence the character of the man to whom it has been given. John tells us that Jesus Christ, after He had informed His disciples of the sufferings that the coming days would bring, the persecutions that would accompany their loyalty to Himself, said to them, although He saw the sorrow His communication brought, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." We should have thought, as probably the disciples did, that He would postpone the day of His departure until the day of their sufferings had gone by, and that He would say, "I will remain with you to sustain you in your trial." Yet His words were, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away." And so it is expedient still, when a man has received a great revelation from God which has made known to him the power and beauty of the truth, and drawn him from the old low-thoughted ways, and uplifted him to a nobler level—so it is expedient, nay, more, necessary, if the revelation is meant to go with him as a benediction through all his days, that God shall withdraw Himself, and leave him alone to wrestle and struggle with the mighty fact, until he shall be born into it, or until its glory shall be born in him. Unless every Divine manifestation is followed by that experience, the magnificent gifts it brings will waste away instead

of becoming the inspiration of a nobler character, of a finer, truer, loftier, and more faithful life. Thus, what we call the wilderness ought to have another name bestowed upon it; for it is no longer an experience of dismay, fraught only with the possibilities of sorrow, but the way through which we reach the highest attainments of our manhood, and become possessed of the character of the sons of God.

Yet, though temptation is necessary to our spiritual growth, IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT WE GROW BECAUSE OF IT. The wilderness is not to every soul the way to the promised land. There is always the downward as well the upward possibility. To some it brings no knowledge of good, and the voices which they hear are not those of the angels of God. To them it is a desert indeed! But that need not be. "God has provided some better thing for us." The wilderness has been trodden by the Captain of our salvation: it was there He fought and won. And faith in Him gives us the victory over our temptations, and steadies us amid all the shifting scenes and moods of life. Here is the hope of all wearied and perplexed, and tempted and sinful souls—in Christ, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and who "suffered being tempted" that He might "succour them that are tempted." He will keep you from the evil of the world, if only you will let Him, and will lead you more surely than ever Moses led the hosts of Israel, until He brings you safely through all darkness and peril, temptation and sorrow, to the home that is never darkened and the light that is never dimmed.

GLOUCESTER.

HENRY SHAW.



"There is one wish ruling over all mankind; and it is a wish which is never, in any single instance, granted. Each man wishes to be his own master. It is a boy's beatific vision, and it remains the grown-up man's ruling passion to the last. But the fact is, life is a service; the only question is, whom will we serve."

F. W. FABER.

## The Doing of the Will of God a Compendium of the Divine Life.

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"FATHER, IF THOU BE WILLING, REMOVE THIS CUP FROM ME : NEVERTHELESS NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE, BE DONE."—*Luke* xxii. 42.

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THE hours that we spend in devout contemplation of the sorrows of our blessed Saviour are among the most solemn, fruitful, and precious hours of our life. And it is a part of our Lord's marvellous grace that He always makes this sorrow fruitful to reverent hearts. For there are sorrows so lofty and so ineffably mysterious that we cannot enter into them by any mere *effort of the will*, however well disposed our *will* may be. [Great part of the apparent heartlessness of men is not deliberately meant, but springs from sheer inability to fathom the experiences in question.] We men need not only that our deliberate neglect of Christ should be forgiven and removed, but, what is far more difficult, that the moral insensitiveness, the incapacity of entering into sublime experiences (which is the Nemesis of sensual, and even of indifferent life) should be thawed. And our gracious Lord is every day not simply attracting the careless, but giving men eyes to see and hearts to feel. May He take our lives to-night into the sacred region of Gethsemane, and bathe us in its wondrous spirit.

The verses which describe this most momentous conflict that the world has ever known are familiar to us. What do we see? The *agony* of an innocent person, innocent, not simply in the sense of passing every standard of recognised law, but the Creator of a new ideal of holiness. And yet He is in agony! This is agony for the sin and sorrow of all mankind, and it is the agony of the Son of God.

If this narrative is to touch us, we must have a new spiritual sense conferred upon us, for it is so overwhelming and mysterious as to paralyse our poor human thought. Yet, even in the hardest, it might well stir (1) a feeling of profound *sorrow*. *Sorrow*, I say, not *sympathy*, sympathy here is an impossible intrusion upon

this lonely supremacy of woe. The Christ says still to the world, as of old to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for Me, weep for yourselves." (2) *Self-reproach*. For that scene convicts our daily life of feebleness, aimlessness, and cowardice; and again we ask perforce is there anything in *me* which helped to cause Christ's Gethsemane? But also it stirs a feeling (3) of mighty *hope*. Just there where the darkness is blackest, begins to dawn the world's light of victory. For this was the agony of One who took upon Himself the tremendous burden of the world's guilt, and who bore it not in vain.

The issues of Gethsemane lie at the root of our strength and hope. The Son of God has given Himself for us. Here we may cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death," but answer with gravely tremulous joy and trust, "I thank God through Jesus Christ, my Lord." Now the words which mark the crisis of Gethsemane, the words which include the whole victory, are these: "Not my will, but Thine be done." The point I wish to elicit this evening is this—*The doing of the will of God is the glorious compendium of our entire human life*.

It covers all our life, and is a quite intelligible and imperative law for it all. Only when our *whole life* has accepted and applied this law can we use it with profit in our special critical seasons. Times of crushing sorrow lead men (at all other times indifferent) to say, "It is God's will, I suppose God's will must be done." And men whose lives have been very guilty and reckless say sometimes at death, "God's will must be done." But God does not ask from us a sullen, mechanical acknowledgment, nor the shriek as of wretched, hunted things brought to bay and sinking under a suddenly glimpsed and awful omnipotence. God is not like *some men*, therefore to His heart such cries as these cannot be gratifying, but must be unspeakably pathetic.

But, indeed, we know not how the grace of God may have worked upon some of these men in their terrible hour, so as to fill with hopeful light a confession which seems strange to us. Still, at the best of them, these last cries out of a wasted life are sad to hear, in one way; and they *must* be imperfect. If then our resignation in our moments of helplessness is to be a really



spiritual, intelligent, and valuable experience, devotion to God should have been the inspiration of our previous life.

For light upon this, turn back to the life of Christ and you will find that the "Thy will be done" in Gethsemane was simply *one ray* of the great light that had filled His life. Take for example His reply to the devil's temptation about bread-making out of stones. Take His wonderful reply to the disciples who pressed food upon Him by Jacob's Well, "*My meat is to do the will of God.*" So in numberless other instances; and let us remember that these statements of His were simply the special applications of the *grand general principle of life* which He handed down in His ever-memorable prayer, "*Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*"

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This brief sentence, when taken in conjunction with the life and work of Him who gave it us, contains in germ nearly all the theology we men require. For—

1. It defines the being of God. *Will* lies at the core of personality. If our God has a will He is no *fate*, no stream of tendency, but a personal God.

"O living Will that shall endure  
When all that seems shall suffer shock."

2. It confesses His absolute goodness by expressing the broad desire, "Thy will be done!" Could we pray that of any other will whatsoever?

3. It contains the consolation, so real and wonderful, that there is a state, a place wherein this perfect will is absolutely done.

4. It contains our sad confession that, at present, this will is *not done upon earth*.

5. It enshrines the profound truth that the *heavenly is the measure of the earthly ideal*. God's will is to be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

That prayer then (which belongs to our subject to-night) is at the foundation of all true and satisfying religion. In what has been said above we see our way to three great principles that tower above the usual in life. The doing of the will of God is—



I.—The beginning of our strength against sin.

II.—The positive inspiration of Christian life.

III.—The solace of our sorrows.

I.—THE CHANGING OF THE HUMAN WILL LIES AT THE THRESHOLD OF CONVERSION. Man's desertion of God has left its melancholy trace on every part of his nature. The intellect is clouded, the heart has been degraded, but it is in the region of the *will* that the mischief has been most apparently great, the degradation most appalling. In the mind and heart singular traces have been preserved of that glorious image in which man was originally created. In the *mind*: the masterpieces of genius, the quest of truth, illustrated in many lives, aspirations, &c. On the whole, the survival has been great here. And the *heart*: many traces of the heavenly origin have been retained. They are, it is true, feeble and overlaid with much evil passion and foul imagination, but they are there. Even amid crime and guilt strangely pure affections may and do nestle to our amazement. It is in the *will-region* that the fall is most perceptible. It was the perverted choice of man that led him astray. The will keeps sinister signs of that great and perpetually-renewed revolt. One sentence may suffice for proof—take it as you will from the lips of Paul, Horace, or Robert Burns—take it as the personal memory of your own most shameful and bitter anguish. "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." That is the cry of our unaided nature at its best: the cry of it at its worst, who dares to repeat?

And from this enfeebled or perverted moral nature the poison spreads to the rest of our system. By it, knowledge is wedded to base uses and the emotions are turned to evil. The heart *cannot* be right until the will of man is yielded to the will of God. The essence of sin is the enthronement of our evil will. The question of salvation is largely that of immolation of the will of man to that of God; not blindly to an harshly absolute and unknown tyranny, but the eager devotion of our will to His, known as holy, and good, and gracious. We have no strength of our own that is equal to this surrender. But in Christ we find it. He bestows upon us the grace which strengthens the will of

the penitent and cleansed sinner, and makes it equal to self-surrender and devotion to God. Our great rebellion is seated in the will. And the return of the sinner to his God is marked by the words, uttered in the strength of Christ, "I will arise and go to my Father."

II.—THIS SELF-DEVOTION TO THE WILL OF GOD IS ALSO THE INSPIRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. The great work is far from finished when the penitent is welcomed back to God. Moral and spiritual progress has to be ensured. And what really sound basis is there for this—but in our steadfast conception of the will of God for our sanctification, and a devout concentration of all our energies on this? "Thy will be done" covers the whole ground of our progressing, spiritual, moral culture. Further, every Christian has *work to do* for God. We can only summarise our vocation in this one sentence, "Thy will be done." Work done under any lower impulse must necessarily come short.

The grave mistake of many Christians and Christian workers is that they interpret the will of God *negatively rather than positively*. They are still under Sinai. They can hear only the "Thou shalt *not*!" Theirs is the Socratic *δαίμων*—friendly only to warn against evil, rather than to inspire with and for good. This is a pity, for the "will of God" should have positive inspiration. To many it still seems rather vague, remote, and ineffective, so they fall back on the lower motives of expediency, human sympathetic claim, &c. Our work will never be done as it should be done until the "*will of God*" is always eloquent, full of power to us, and ever nigh unto us.

Even the recognised moral duties gain new force and sanction when we know of a personal and holy will behind the veil and have made it ours. And this powerful faith introduces *new duties and aims* impossible else. Our great need is a sense of greater and more binding reality in these august spiritual truths which we toss so glibly out of our mouth.

It is needless to speak further on this matter. It is the strength and grandeur of Christian life. And the reason why our lives are not more fruitful is because we forget it. Here, then, is the vast and continuous inspiration of the Christian life,

the motto, but how wondrously enlarged and made clear, since it led us out of the darkness of impenitent sin. "Not My will, but Thine be done." And—

III.—THE DOING OF THE WILL OF GOD has now so mastered our life that it may naturally become THE SOLACE OF OUR SORROWFUL AND HELPLESS HOURS. It is, however, not always easy to make this general inspiration of our working life into an unfailing solace of our bitter times. Good and holy men may cry out when the iron enters their own souls; they are tempted to arraign the justice of God. The path may not always be smooth; they may fear as they enter into the cloud. And at this men of the world smile, a hard derisive smile, at the vanity of the Christian hope and the inconsistency of Christians. They do not well to smile. Christ had done perfectly the will of God, and yet He had His Gethsemane. And that fact is a ceaseless comfort to struggling Christians. His victory becomes ours. Thus, in the solitary region of our bitter need, our weakness and bereavement, in the hour of death, this cry becomes once more the strength of those who found in it the beginning of their conversion and the inspiration of their whole Christian course. "Not My will, but Thine be done." And how great the need of looking beyond this visible, to the pure and perfect will of God. Believe in that, and death begins to lose its immense and disproportionate power. In this shadowy life of ours, the form of death grows like a spectre on the Brocken mountains, and looms vaster and more terrible than is the truth through the haze that we ourselves create.

The Lord, whose passion we think of now, has crushed death back into its legitimate place as an *incident* in our immortal progress. But, oh! how imperative it is that in our anguish we may be comforted, and that in our hour of death we may pass away, not as on the strength of a hasty resolve or vague conjecture, but with a faith deepened and illuminated by the experience of past years; by our long and sacred habit of referring all things to that high and glorious will of God, and that thus we may be enabled to commend ourselves unhesitatingly and peacefully into the hands of our Heavenly Father.

BRIGHTON.

T. RHYS EVANS.

## Quenching the Spirit.

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“QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.”—1 *Thess.* v. 19.

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(*For Whit-Sunday.*)

IN nature we notice how a wonderful amount of expressed and implied truth may be compressed into the smallest compass. A grain of dust expresses far-reaching truths concerning the laws of nature. How much, also, it suggests! So, also, in the moral and spiritual world. In the briefest sentence God can put infinite truth. The whole moral law is contained in the sentence, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul,” &c. The complete “Gospel of the grace of God” is found in the simple phrase, “God so loved the world,” &c.

The text is an illustration of an infinite amount of truth, couched in a simple and brief phrase. Who can fathom its *expressed* and *implied* meaning? To-day we bring especially to mind the ministration of the Spirit of God. It is needful to dwell upon this truth with special emphasis, because thus (*a*) we offer the fullest reverence to the Deity. Some one has said that the “Holy Spirit is the least known, the least loved, the least worshipped among the Divine persons of the Trinity.” \* Vague and erroneous ideas prevail as to the presence and work of the Holy Ghost. The services and teaching of to-day help to counteract this (illustrate from the Creeds, Collect, Lessons, &c., said and sung at this Festival). (*b*) We realise the due proportion of the faith and truth. Not only the mystery, &c., of God’s Being; the love, patience, and self-sacrifice of the Son ought to call forth our devotion, worship, and gratitude, but the perpetual

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\* Compare on this:—Pearson on the “Creed”—Art., “The Holy Ghost”; Dr. Wace’s “Chief Facts in our Lord’s Life”; Maurice’s “Theological Essays”—Art., “The Holy Spirit”; Dr. Parker’s “Paraclete”; Schmid’s “Biblical Theology of the New Testament”; Bp. Webb’s “Addresses on the Presence, &c., of the Holy Spirit”; Moberley’s Bampton Lectures on “The Administration of the Holy Spirit”; Hare’s “Mission of the Comforter”; and Heber’s “Personality and Office of the Comforter.”



inspiration, guidance, &c., of the Holy Spirit should do so likewise. (c) We protest against all forms of materialism (cf. Liddon's University Sermons, First Series, p. 309, for a striking illustration of this). Consider the text as showing—

I.—A DISTINGUISHED PRIVILEGE. Here it is assumed that we possess the indwelling of the Spirit; that the “fire” of the Holy Ghost is already kindled in us. Note the difference between having the Spirit *with* and *in* us. Compare the influences of the Spirit *with* man as seen in nature, the Bible, history, &c., and the influences *in* us. It is the very essence of all true worship, and also the special revelation of the Christian faith that God is not only near and around us, but that He has made a Temple within us. The Christian sees clearly the truth of Seneca's words, “God is near you, is with you, is in you. A Sacred Spirit sits within us, the observer and watch of our evil actions and our good. As He is treated by us so He treats us. There is no good man without God. Can anyone rise superior to the changes of fortune unless assisted by Him? He it is that suggests great and lofty counsels to us. In every good man God dwells.” We are “partakers of the Divine nature.” The “fire” of the Spirit dwells within as the means and motive to (a) *Spiritual purification*. Fire destroys in order to purify (illustrate the purifying power of fire). We need spiritual purity in mind, heart, and life. God, by His Spirit, purifies, &c. (b) *Spiritual illumination*. Opening of the eyes to the wonders of God's law and dealing, &c. (c) *Spiritual comfort*, and (d) *Spiritual assimilation*.

II.—AN ALARMING PERIL. This “fire” *may* be “quenched.” The peril is real. No mere figure of speech. No false alarm. No mere dream of the imagination. The peril lies before us all. It is a peril involving (1) *infinite results*: contempt of God and of all His words, &c. Self injury most fearful. Loss of life, power, joy, satisfaction, &c. (2) *Assuming many forms*. The pleasures of the world, &c. (3) *Presenting fascinating appearances*. Silent and subtle, &c. (4) *Employing varied agencies*. World, flesh, and devil.

III.—*An awful possibility*. The Spirit *can* be “quenched.” Theoretical difficulties connected herewith are great. The old



mystery of God's sovereignty and man's free will. The fact however is clear. Man can work with God, or he can resist all His gracious influences. The fire can be fed so as to grow into a bright and beautiful flame, or it may be allowed to die out. The flood may be taken which "leads on to fortune," or it may be lost. The means of improvement may be used or let lie idly near, &c. How this "quenching" may take place varies in each individual. Whoever opposes the true laws of his nature and the rules of God is really quenching the Spirit of God. By (1) *deliberate neglect*; (2) *resistance*; (3) and bringing *incompatible elements* together "fire" may be quenched. So is it spiritually, &c. Learn then the importance and solemnity of life. Reverence yourselves. "Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost." Compare the words of the late F. D. Maurice in his recently published "Life." "It is the awful sense of the continual presence of God in the soul which I believe can alone effectually preserve from the vagaries of our own fancies. I am sure for myself that in proportion as I believed the word of St. Paul, strictly and substantially, that we are 'the temples of the Holy Ghost,' should I be afraid to yield to chance and wayward impulses, excited feelings, and winds of doctrine; should I be in a calm, peaceful, rational state, caring for nothing but truth, ready to sacrifice every conceit and opinion that I might find it." Obey God's laws. "Keep yourselves unspotted from the world." Be diligent in the use of all God's many "means of grace." The fire from the Shekinah lit that fire which burnt on the large brazen altar in the court of the priests. It was the priests' duty to keep the same burning perpetually. God has lit the "fire" within our souls. See to it that such be kept pure and tended.

AUTHORPE RECTORY.

JAMES FOSTER, B.A.

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"Do you remember what Charles Lamb says about his wanting 'a grace' before Shakspeare and Milton as well as 'a grace' before meat. I am sure this is true if our books are not to choke us."—F. D. MAURICE.

# Homiletical Commentary.

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

### “The Wisdom that is from Above.”

Chapter iii. 17, 18.—“BUT THE WISDOM THAT IS FROM ABOVE IS FIRST PURE, THEN PEACEABLE, GENTLE, AND EASY TO BE ENTREATED, FULL OF MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS, WITHOUT PARTIALITY, AND WITHOUT HYPOCRISY. AND THE FRUIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS SOWN IN PEACE OF THEM THAT MAKE PEACE.”

THE apostle has just been speaking of a wisdom which is *not* from above, which does not produce the fruits of righteousness, which, on the contrary, wherever it shows itself, is accompanied by, as its natural offspring, confusion and discord, every unrighteous and evil work. He has been speaking of the things which he has seen, he has been telling of what anyone might have seen any day in these early Churches where one would have thought there could scarcely have been time for the development of such a state of things, the picture of men, let us hope there were few of them, striving in the Church of Christ for selfish pre-eminence, eager to take the foremost place in speaking and in ruling, cruel in the use of their tongue, full of envy in their hearts and of strife upon their lips, wise in their own estimation, too self-conceited indeed to see that their wisdom was but folly, nay, that it was worse than folly; that its origin, despite all their pretensions to greater light and knowledge, was not from above but from beneath, that it was earthly, sensual, demoniacal. The apostle makes a supposition; had not the reality been before him the supposition had not been made. He had seen the bitter envying

and strife going on before his own eyes, he had seen the confusion and every evil work which naturally and necessarily ensued; and judging it by its results, seeing the nature of the root in the character of the fruit, he unhesitatingly declared that their vaunted wisdom was a false wisdom, a wisdom which did not descend from above, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

But there is a blessed counterpart to all this, there is something else the apostle has seen in the congregations of the faithful; he has seen that mode of living which, the outcome of a wisdom

The wisdom  
that is from  
above.

which is from above, justifies its Divine claim by the peaceable and abiding results it ever ensures.

There may be a false wisdom, but there is a true wisdom as well: the false is from beneath, the true is from above; the false has its native element in strife and disgrace, the true is ever encompassed with compassions, and gentleness, and peace; the false issues in disorder, evil, death; the true shines forth in the quiet orderliness of the stars of heaven, is full of good fruits and abides unto everlasting life. "*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable,*" &c.

What then is the wisdom which is from above? Christ is the wisdom which is from above, Christ the wisdom of God. And He was pure, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;

Christ the  
wisdom from  
above.

so pure that evil could not reach Him, so pure that goodness could but delight in Him, was always well pleased with Him. He was peaceable and gentle,

kind and considerate, ever ready to listen to the prayer of everyone who came near Him, never thinking of His own needs but always of the needs of others, exhausting Himself in His self-sacrificing, thoughtful, and beneficent efforts. And He was full of mercy, tender to the erring, pitiful to the sorrowful, compassionate to the hungry, never breaking but always strengthening the bruised reed, never quenching but always fanning again into living flame the smoking flax. Is it needful to speak of the fruitfulness of His life, of its unswerving steadfastness in all that was righteous, of His perfect sincerity in all that was true, of the peace which this Peacemaker has shed in such rich abundance

upon our earth? It was in the possession of profound Divine peace that He lived and moved, it was by His hand the fruit of righteousness was sown which is, by-and-bye to be reaped and garnered in the great day of the Lord.

Again, what or who is the wisdom which is from above? The man in whom Christ lives, in whose heart Christ is the living motive power, the inspiration, and the impulse of all he thinks

In whom is  
the wisdom  
that is from  
above?

and does; this man is the wisdom which is from above, the wisdom of God. "Christ in you," "Christ liveth in you," "Christ who of God is made unto you wisdom," what is all this but to say that

just in so far as a man is possessed by Christ, obeys His words, loves His laws, cherishes His spirit, is conformed to His life, so far is he at the same time pure, peaceable, gentle, &c. Get a Christian man anywhere, and to the extent that he is a Christian man, he will be the manifestation of this seven-fold wisdom, every attribute of it will be, more or less, his possession; in proportion to his spirituality of mind and heart will he come up to the heavenly wisdom to which, as with a deep sense of relief, the apostle now turns. For observe how the loveliness of the Divine beauty draws away and draws away up his thoughts, and how from his pen there comes *his* rendering, from his pencil there comes his picture, worthy to be placed beside that other which another apostle gives of the supernal love, the pure and the peaceable wisdom, the love which suffereth long and is kind. Christ is the wisdom which is from above, so is the Christian man.

James uses the abstract word wisdom, but it is not an abstraction he is speaking about, it is something that exists, that is real, and warm, and active, and fruitful, something you can see, and feel, and come under the influence of and be the better for. He says wisdom, he means a wise man; he seems to be contemplating something away up above us, he is looking into our very hearts, he is addressing each of us singly here and now, saying to each of us that if *we* be Christ's, that if we belong to Christ at all, that if our profession of the name of Christ is something more than a profession, *we* are pure, *we* are peaceable, *we* are easy to be



entreated, *we* are full of mercy and of good fruits, *we* are without partiality and without hypocrisy.

*First, pure.* In the first place pure, in the second place all the rest. Not that we must first be pure in the order of time before we can partake in any degree of the other qualities of the Divine

**Such wisdom  
is pure.**

wisdom; these other qualities grow together with, at the same time as this purity, for the Christian life, like every other kind of life, grows harmoniously and simultaneously in all its parts. The apostle does not mean this, neither does he mean first pure before you are to be peaceable, as if we were to make him say that Christians are first to attain to a perfect purity of life and of doctrine before they may be peaceable with others who may not yet, or who may never see eye to eye with them in all things, thus hallowing intolerance and uncharitableness in the name of the Divine wisdom Himself. There is nothing further from his thoughts than such bigotry, it is the very opposite of what he has been seeking to say.

*First, pure, then peaceable;* there are no modifications of purity, no less or more in purity, but there are modifications of peaceableness, there is less and more in this, and while at all times you must be pure, there may be times when you cannot be peaceable. If it be possible, live peaceably with all men; but you may find this to be impossible, at least you must never sacrifice even the least iota of purity for peace; you must never compromise principle for ease or comfort; you must never surrender truth merely to please the taste, or to still the clamour of the worldly cry for peace, peace! First in the order of rank, pre-eminent, inviolable, *first* pure.

"Pure" here, as an attribute, or rather as the essence of Divine wisdom, means what it means in Scripture throughout, holiness and righteousness of life, chastity and purity in heart, speech, and behaviour, that transparent, translucent quality of spiritual life which, while it is impossible to give anything but the vaguest idea of it to one who does not already possess it, is taken up at once by him "*in whose heart there is the way to it.*" There are some things that

**The way to  
know purity.**



must be experienced before they can be understood, which must be loved before they can be known, and above all these things this is true of the wisdom which is pure, of the purity which is wise. This purity was never known, it was not even vaguely groped for by the heathen mind, and with all the wealth of thought and speculation of the Greeks, it had not even the idea of holiness, the idea of the holiness of that God who says, "Be ye holy for I am holy." The wisdom of the wise was never so plainly shown to be folly, as in the inability of the sinful heart, even among the most cultured of men, to arrive at this true wisdom, the ineffable purity of God, the ineffable purity He demands of all those "who are round about Him." It is the pure in heart alone who arrive at this wisdom, or, if you will, purity and wisdom are but two different names for the same thing; it is the purged eye, the eye cleared from everything that blinds, or distorts, or prejudices, that sees Divine things clearly, and which, therefore, is wise; the sinful, impure heart cannot see the hidden things of God. Take a mere pleasure-loving man, not a grossly impure man, but a mere easy-going, worldly man, reputable, respectable, respected for many things, this man does not know wisdom, he is totally ignorant of spiritual things, he has no idea of the pure or the holy. He may have the "word" pure, or the "word" holy, or many more such, but he does not know the "thing" purity, or holiness, just because "the eye can only see that which it brings with it the power to see." It is a somewhat noteworthy fact here, that while the Greeks had not fewer than five words which being translated are rendered *purity*, they had nothing at all approaching the Scriptural idea of purity, they had the words but they had not the thing! It is also a noteworthy fact that when there was needed a Greek word into which to pour the fulness of the revealed idea of holiness, the translators took that one of the five which had been least of all used in profane writings, as if they would choose the least contaminated among them as a vessel into which to pour Divine treasure, baptizing it unto the name of heavenly purity, and consecrating it for this its highest honour. The world by wisdom knew not God, for the world cannot know wisdom; only the

pure in heart can know God. *First*, pure; *first* in the order of rank, of pre-eminence, of inviolableness, of necessity. *First* pure.

After this all the rest; and among them, *peaceable and gentle*. Give up nothing of purity even for peace, give up everything but purity for peace; these two go together, and this seems to be the order of their going. Purity is the essence of heavenly wisdom, peaceableness is not only a quality of this wisdom, it is also the condition of its growth and development. While, then, we must give up nothing of purity, we must give up everything else but purity for peace; and so we shall be gentle, considerate, conciliatory, not always standing upon our own rights, though we may know well enough what these are, ready to waive a point where no principle is involved, subordinating everything to the progress of purity and, therefore, to the maintenance of peace. *First* pure, *then* peaceable.

Everything to  
be subordi-  
nate to  
purity.

But now how is the peaceable to be maintained? What is the condition of *its* existence, of *its* growth? Purity greatly depends upon peace; what does peace for the most part depend upon? Let the Apostle answer as he brackets these two together, seldom separate, *peaceable and gentle*; peaceable leaning on gentle, supported by gentle, spread and maintained by gentle. For what is this other quality of the Divine wisdom which the moment he speaks of peace suggests itself to the Apostle's mind? It is considerateness, it is the spirit which remembers that it may give up its rights as well as stand to them; that it is a Christ-like thing to think of others in respect of their ignorance and even of their prejudices, and to yield to them of gentleness what might be claimed from them of right. Gentleness with the Apostle, as with all Scripture, is not the easy, natural amiability to which we give the name; it is a considerateness which is the outcome of Christian principle, which has often to make an effort to resist *inconsiderateness* before it can have free course. Gentleness is not weak imbecility, it is the strength of a strong man, by which in the very exercise of strength he refuses to exert it. James is not speaking about,

The condition  
of peace-  
ableness.

it is not his way to speak about all easy, amiable gentleness; he is speaking of *principled considerateness*. And after all that may be said of Christian men in other respects, the want of this quality of the Christian life greatly mars their usefulness. But to proceed. This wisdom is *easy to be entreated*; that is, for there are two possible and equally good renderings—it is *persuadable* or it is *persuasive*. Being considerate of others, it is easy to be entreated to be more considerate still. A considerate man is very open to entreaty; he looks all round, he weighs all arguments, and he gives great weight to those which entreat him not to stand upon his own rights: but just because of this he is *persuasive*, being considerate he influences, he leads because he refuses to lead; yielding up his own rights, who could long stand upon theirs? Christian principled considerateness is persuadable and persuasive; in the long run it is the meek who shall inherit the earth.

It is the mark of true wisdom everywhere, the spirit which hastens to do deeds of benevolence, which visits the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, which remembers them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them which suffer adversity as being themselves also in the body, which, in a word, seeks to become more and more like Him who went about continually doing good, who was full of compassion, “all whose mercies were tender mercies, all whose kindnesses were loving kindnesses, full of *mercies and good fruits*.”

“*Without partiality and without hypocrisy*,” rather, without wavering and without hypocrisy. “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” A man of two minds, who does not know what his mind is, is always wavering, always in doubt: “the wisdom that is from above” is never in that condition, it has not two minds, has no tendency to waver, it is fixed and stable, rooted in the everlasting truth. And as it has not two minds, so also it has not two voices; it has not one thing which it says to itself and another thing which it says to others: for it is *without hypocrisy*.

A word or two in conclusion on the somewhat peculiar language with which the Apostle concludes: “*and the fruit of righteousness*”

*is sown in peace of them that make peace."* There are Christian men whose whole life is lived in the atmosphere of peace. In the calm depths of their own souls they are in the possession of peace, peace with themselves, peace with their fellowmen, because peace with God. Being in the atmosphere of peace, constantly working for it, they are constantly perfecting it. If there be those who have fallen out, they seek to effect reconciliation again between them; where peace already prevails they strive to preserve and maintain it. Everything they do, every word they utter, every speech they make, in the family or in the church meeting, has for its aim to restore or to deepen peace. These men, then, make peace; making peace in peace, they at the same time sow the fruit of righteousness. The language is noteworthy. It is not usual to speak about sowing fruit, it is *seed* that men sow; and yet the apostle says, *fruit* is sown, the harvest is sown, the garnered sheaves are sown! He wants to lay emphasis upon the abundance, the riches, the wealth, the fertility of peace-making lives, lives whose atmosphere is peace. He passes in swift imagination over the spring-time, and already has the autumn gathering full in sight, the rich harvest of a peaceable, peace-making life; the fruits of righteousness, the fruit which consists in righteousness, or the fruit which grows out of righteousness, the varied and blessed results which necessarily flow from righteous lives: "for the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

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"Many, if not most truths have a dark side, a side by which they are connected with mysteries too high for us; nay, I think it is commonly but a poor and miserable truth which the human mind can walk all round; but at all events they have one side by which we can lay hold of them."—RUSKIN.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF  
THE KINGS.

## Good Aims and Bad Methods.

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"AND THE KING SENT," &c.—2 *Kings* xxiii. 1-28.

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WHY should the Israelitish people be called the "JEWISH CHURCH"? If the Church means an assembly of godly men, it is a misnomer. The Jewish people a Church indeed! Did the world ever contain a people more morally corrupt? When we mark them journeying in the wilderness forty years, a more murmuring, disorderly, rebellious set of men where else could we discover? When settled in Palestine, a "land flowing with milk and honey," we find them committing every crime of which humanity is capable, adulteries, suicides, murders, ruthless wars, gross idolatries, their priests impostors, their kings bloody tyrants. Even David, whom they praised the most, was a man of debauchery, falsehood, and blood. They were a nation seething in depravities. They were "stiff-necked and uncircumcised in

heart and ears," they did "always resist the Holy Ghost" (See Acts vii. 51). How such a community came to be called a Church I know not. Perhaps no greater calamity has befallen the race than such a misnomer. Professed followers of Him, who declared His kingdom not to be of this world, have by millions throughout Christendom fashioned their communities after this model. From it they have taken their ideas of kings and kingdoms, royalties and religions, their politics, civil and ecclesiastic. No nation ever formed a more blasphemous, degrading, and revolting idea of the God of the universe, and yet their God is the God held up in most of the Churches of Christendom for worship. The wars of these people sanction bishops to consecrate the banners of modern war-



riors, and are pleaded as a justification when premiers and princes engage in the bloody work. If a Church means a community of men lovingly loyal to their fellows and their God, then the Jewish people were rather a league of hypocrites, murderers, and robbers, than a Church.

These remarks are suggested by the Jewish abominations recorded in this chapter, and are justified, I trow, by all the annals of the race in ancient times. The verses I have selected record and illustrate *good aims* and *bad methods*.

I.—GOOD AIMS. Josiah's aims, as here presented, were confessedly high, noble, and good. I offer two remarks concerning his purposes as presented in these verses.

First: *To reduce his people to a loyal obedience to heaven.* His aim was to sweep every vestige of religious error and moral crime from his dominion. Truly, what more laudable purpose could any man have than this, to crush all evil within his domain, to crush it not only in its forms but in its essence? This was indeed the great end of Christ's

mission to the world. He came "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Josiah's purpose was—

Secondly: *Generated within him by the discovery of the Divine will.* Somehow or other, as was seen in the last chapter, the book of the law which was to regulate the Jewish people, had been lost in the Temple, lost, perhaps, for ages, but Hilkiah the high priest had just discovered it, and Josiah becomes acquainted with its contents. What is the result? He is seized with the burning conviction that the whole nation is gone wrong, and forthwith he seeks to flash the same conviction into the souls of his people. "*And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood by*

a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant." Thus sprung his noble purpose. It was not a capricious whim, or the outcome of a sudden and fitful impulse, it was rooted in an enlightened conviction. A noble purpose must be righteously founded. Whilst we have here good aims, we have also—

II.—BAD METHODS. Real good work requires not only a good purpose but a good method also. Saul sought to honour the God of his fathers, and this was good: but his method, viz., that of persecuting the Christians was *bad*. How did Josiah now seek to realise his purpose, to sweep idolatry from the face of his country? Not by argument, suasion, and moral influence, but by brute force and violence (verses 4 to 28). "*All the vessels that were made for Baal and for the grove*" (ver. 4), that is, all the apparatus for idol

worship, these he ordered to be burnt outside Jerusalem, "*in the fields of Kidron.*" He "*stamped all to small powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. He brake down the houses of the Sodomites*" (v. 6, 7). He also "*brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men*" (ver. 14). Moreover "*he slew all the priests of the high places that were there upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them*" (ver. 20). In this way, the way of force and violence, he essayed to work out his grand purpose.

I offer two remarks concerning his method.

First: It was *unphilosophic*. Moral evils cannot be put down by force; coercion cannot travel to a man's soul. The fiercest wind, the most vivid lightnings cannot reach the moral Elijah in his cave. The "still small voice" alone can touch him, and bring him out to light and truth. After all this, were the people less idolatrous? Before Josiah was cold in his grave idolatry was as rife as ever. You may destroy to-day all heathen

temples and priests on the face of the earth, but in doing this you have done nothing towards quenching the spirit of idolatry, that will remain as rampant as ever; phoenix-like, it will rise with new vitality and vigour from the ashes into which material fires have consumed its temples, its books, and its feasts. Aye, and you may destroy all the temples, priests, and theological tomes of the Roman Catholic Church, and leave the spirit of Popery as strong, nay, stronger than ever. Truth alone can conquer error, love alone can conquer wrath, right alone can conquer wrong.

Another remark concerning Josiah's method is—

Secondly: It was *mischievous*. The evil was not extinguished; it burnt with fiercer flame. Persecution has always propagated the errors it has sought to crush. The crucified Malefactor became the moral Conqueror and Commander of the people. Violence begets violence, anger begets anger, war begets war. "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword."

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

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"As regards charity, a man might extend to others the ineffable tenderness which he has for his own sins and errors because he knows the whole history of them. And though, taken at a particular time they appear very large and very black, he knew them in their early days when they were playfellows instead of tyrant demons."—ARTHUR HELPS.

## Seedlings.

### Days of the Christian Year.

John xiv. 31.

(Whitsunday.)

"BUT THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT I LOVE THE FATHER; AND AS THE FATHER GAVE ME COMMANDMENT, EVEN SO I DO."

THEY speak thoughtlessly who speak of Christian men being actuated by one inducement only. We are, or ought to be, influenced by a number of considerations. What we owe to our Divine Father, to our Redeeming Lord; what we owe to our human parents, to our children, to our dependents, to our successors; what we owe to ourselves, both as those who are citizens of earth and as those who anticipate a future life; what is not only obligatory but desirable and becoming;—these and such motives as these should act as restraining and constraining influences on our hearts and lives.

Here are two distinct incentives to a higher and nobler life.

I.—A LOVING REGARD FOR THE HONOUR OF OUR DIVINE LORD. Jesus Christ did *as* He did ("even so I do"), that "the world might know that He loved the Father." He shaped His life continually by a desire that all who witnessed

His course should see and feel that the honour of His Heavenly Father held a supreme place in His esteem. Surely this should be a very powerful factor in our experience. We should "so do," so make our choices, so form our habits, so decide upon our career that everyone about us will recognise the fact that we are concerned for the honour of Christ. Everything we do should be in unmistakeable harmony with our supreme love for Him. The impression which our daily life conveys to those who witness it should be that we are attached to Him as are those who have been redeemed by His death, and who find in their living Lord their best and truest Friend. If a man's life is not naturally suggestive of a reverent and profound affection for His Divine Saviour, it falls seriously short of the standard to which it should attain.

II.—AN OBEDIENT SUBJECTION TO HIS HOLY WILL. "As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." He came to do the will of God (ch. x. 38). He had kept His Father's commandments and was, therefore, abiding in His love (ch. xv. 10). So are we to do our Divine Master's will and to abide in His love. Probably

all Christian men theoretically acknowledge that the will of Jesus Christ should be the law of their life : yet there is a vast breadth of difference between the way in which different men bring that will to bear on their character and their conduct. How far our life is decidedly and distinctively Christian, depends largely on (1) the constancy or frequency with which we consult His will,—whether or not we seek to apply it to the thousand details of business, domestic, social, ecclesiastical life : (2) the commanding position we give to this high consideration,—whether we allow other inducements to prevail over it, or give to it an unchallenged and absolute authority : (3) the seriousness and intelligence with which we try to understand it. The man who satisfies himself with a reference to chapter and verse for a formal direction of duty will find himself far from the goal he should be nearing. It is he who honestly, earnestly, intelligently endeavours, *in every open way*, to discover the will of his Divine Lord, and who then hastens to obey it,—it is only he who has the right to say, in the spirit of his Master, “as the Saviour gave me commandment, even so I do.”

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### Isaiah vi. 1—8.

(Trinity Sunday.)

“IN THE YEAR THAT KING UZZIAH DIED I SAW ALSO THE LORD SITTING UPON A THRONE, HIGH AND LIFTED UP, AND HIS TRAIN FILLED THE TEMPLE. ABOVE IT STOOD THE SERAPHIMS : EACH ONE HAD SIX WINGS ; WITH TWAIN HE COVERED HIS FACE, AND WITH TWAIN HE COVERED HIS FEET, AND WITH TWAIN HE DID FLY. AND ONE CRIED UNTO ANOTHER, AND SAID, HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, IS THE LORD OF HOSTS : THE WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY. AND THE POSTS OF THE DOOR MOVED AT THE VOICE OF HIM THAT CRIED, AND THE HOUSE WAS FILLED WITH SMOKE,” &c.

The year that was marked by the death of the king was memorable by a vision to the prophet that meant life to him. Such a vision as he had we all may have, we all must have, if we are to do such a life work as the prophet's. Both his and our's must be a threefold vision.

I.—A VISION OF GOD. This can only come to us in our present state indirectly, parabolically, or as here, symbolically. It will include a conception of God's (a) *Authority* : “a throne high and lifted up.” (b) *Glory* : “His train filled the temple.” (c) *Holiness* : seraphic action and seraphic tones



proclaimed Him as the Thrice Holy. This name "Holy One" was Isaiah's favourite name of God. John says this was a vision of Jesus.

II.—A VISION OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE. Just as the prophet came to understand that there was a vast spiritual universe behind and beyond the material, and of which the material was but the hint and type, so must we. He saw in the seraphim a revelation of the existence of spiritual beings who were (a) *Reverent*. They "veil," &c. (b) *Alert*: "with their wings they fly," &c. (c) *Individual*: "one cried to another." (d) *Harmonious*: their antiphony was a sweet music. (e) *Enthusiastic*: the energy with which they uttered their mighty joys made the posts of the door shake, &c.

III.—A VISION OF SELF. With the knowledge of God, which is of supreme importance, and the knowledge of the spiritual universe, which is stimulating and inspiring, there is the not less needed knowledge of self. There is a vision of his (a) *Own individuality*. The right use of the pronoun "I" and "me" is a lesson worth learning he finds. (b) *Relationship* to others: "I dwell among a people," &c. (c) *Sinfulness*. To this (1) the vision of God as holy; (2) the vision of spiritual beings as pure; and (3) the consciousness of his

own condition, all contributed. (d) *Possible purification*. Here we have (1) the *supernatural* means of this purification. "A seraph." (2) The connection of these means with *sacrifice*. "From off the altar," &c. An Old Testament way of teaching the truth that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth." (e) *Life mission*. Here we note (1) God's care for the world. It is He who cries "Who will go for Me?" (2) The godly man's response. It is for him eagerly, obediently, loyally to cry, "Here am I, send me." This is the full and final result of the threefold vision. In Isaiah, in Paul, in every godly man, it leads to unselfish consecration to the good of others.

EDITOR.

#### Lutke xvi. 19-31.

(*The First Sunday after Trinity.*)

#### THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

THIS parable concludes and illustrates some earnest words upon the right use of wealth. "The mammon of unrighteousness" can be used for selfish, worldly purposes, or it can be held as a trust committed to a man by God, and in that spirit it can be used. A man looking upon his wealth can say, "Soul, thou hast the means of enjoyment and self-indulgence:

all this treasure is thine own : eat, drink, revel, see the sights and hear the sounds of the world : make thy life a bright round of gaiety and mirth"—or he can say, "Soul, this wealth is not thine own to squander on luxury and outward splendour : thou art but a steward : thou must be faithful in the use of this treasure entrusted to thee : feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, nurse the sick, make the widow's heart glad : use thy worldly goods in the service of God and for the life that is to come." This is the twofold use of wealth which Christ had been unfolding to the Pharisees and others who were listening to Him. "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness ; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles," and to give new force to His teaching and to bring the lesson home to men's hearts, He paints the picture of the rich man and Lazarus—one of the most striking and solemn of all His parables.

Consider the type of character which the parable sets forth.

I.—THE SELFISH ENJOYMENT OF RICHES "There was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day." Here is a man whose wealth enables him to wear

rich clothes and to eat and drink sumptuously, and he does so. That is the sole use to which he puts his money. His house is large, and full of things to please the fancy and to minister to indulgence. A retinue of servants wait upon him, and he says to one, "Go," and he goeth, to another, "Come," and he cometh, to another, "Do this," and he doeth it. His life is full of splendour, and adornment, and show. It is for these things that he lives : they are to him the "good things" of life.

The rich man is so absorbed in the enjoyment of his princely apparel and elaborate feasts and worldly magnificence that he has neither thought nor heart for the poor and suffering around him. Providence sends him one poor man to care for, but he gives no heed to the pitiable sufferer. "And a certain beggar named Lazarus, was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, yea, even the dogs came and licked his sores." He has been brought thither, it may be, by the last who had the charge of him, and who now release themselves of all further care of him, thinking they have done enough in putting him in the porch and under the very eyes of one so able to relieve him from

day to day. There was the rich man's opportunity for the exercise of benevolence and humanity. He could not pass from his house to the street without seeing the poor, dying leper. The rich never lack opportunity for doing good to the needy. The sick and sorrowful and hungry always find their way to the gates of the well-to-do. It is natural that they should do so. They are only obeying the guidance of that Providence who ordains that the man of high degree should help his brother of low degree. They are God-sent ones. No rich man is ever left without opportunities for making to himself friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness. They have the poor always with them, pleading with the silent yet mighty eloquence of want and suffering for pity and help.

The sight of Lazarus was enough to move the coldest heart. But there was no tender charity, no outstretched hand of help, no daily portion from the loaded table, no protecting shelter from the hot glare of the sun by day and the cold air by night. The friendless beggar was left to lie at the gate, passing the weary hours in pain and want, dragging out the few closing days of a life that had already lost all that was worth living for. The rich man is not painted as a man of vice or hard-

heartedness or cruelty. But he lived for himself. He devoted his wealth to his own gratification, spent it upon purple and fine linen and sumptuous feasting. Nothing closes the fountains of sympathy and humanity so much as a life of proud and selfish worldliness and luxury. This is one of the perils that beset rich men. Every man to whom wealth has been given should ask himself, "Am I selfish, ease-loving? Is my money dragging me down to animalism? Am I losing spirituality, faith in God and Heaven? Is my inward heart-life narrowing as my outward life of circumstances is growing larger and more abundant?" Not only in the day of poverty and struggle do we need to pray for deliverance, but also, and perhaps even more earnestly, in the day of wealth and surrounding plenty.

II.—THE FUTURE AWAKING OUT OF A LIFE OF SELFISHNESS. The description of the state of the dead is according to the current ideas of the time. Being familiar to the people around Him, they would serve Christ's purpose better than any other conceptions. The "bosom of Abraham" was the common idea of future blessedness. The spirit of Lazarus being carried to heaven by angels was also in harmony with Jewish belief. The conversation between the rich man and Abraham in Hades was

not a strange thing, but quite in keeping with the general conception of the spirit world.

The revelation that bursts upon the rich man in the future life is very terrible. His life had closed in the midst of the magnificence which his wealth had created, and he was buried with the pomp and grandeur that was thought fitting for such a man. But before the splendid ceremony of his funeral is over, and while the memory of his brilliant and luxurious life is still fresh, he has already awaked to the reality of his character and condition. His life has been utterly wrong. A new light now falls upon him and he sees that he must curse himself with the epithets "fool" and "sinner." "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame." This is a sad picture of the moral awaking of a selfish, worldly nature in the spirit world. His flattering dream of ease and self-enjoyment is exchanged for the stern realities of eternity. He has sought to save his life and has lost it. Dives, whom men looked upon with envy, whose

name carried with it thoughts of gold and grandeur, has been, after all, only walking a glittering road to a future of woe and anguish. Every act of selfish indulgence is a drop of bitterness added to the cup of eternity. Every neglect of the poor and afflicted around him gives a keener intensity to the fire of remorse that burns in his soul in Hades. Before his tormented mind the opportunities for benevolence which he has let slip come with startling vividness; each lost opportunity a barbed arrow piercing his awakened conscience. The festivities, the delights, the luxuries, the hours of ease, of which his life was so full, are all turned into tongues of flame. Behind him lies a wasted past, that prompts him and makes him cry out, "I am in anguish."

And even his cry for relief only brings to him an answer that for the time adds to his woe. "Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now here he is comforted and thou art in anguish." Dives had not believed in the higher good which is apprehended by faith. He had chosen as his "good things" that which he could taste and see and wear. He had treated as visionary and unreal the "good" of character, duty, moral goodness. But now

he sees that he has been in a guilty, foolish dream. The things upon which he set his heart, and which he esteemed as "good," were only the lowest form of good. The poor leper, who had lain at the gate, full of sores, had in reality a better lot than the rich man with all his purple and fine linen and sumptuous feasting every day. Though Lazarus lacked bread and home and friends, yet it is seen he was one of God's saints, and so was truly richer than Dives. Though Dives had perhaps turned with disgust from the beggar, as a sight too revolting for his fastidious eyes, yet in reality the one had a higher good than the other. The lowliest saint has a better heritage than the man of wealth who selfishly lives only for himself. The one has a heritage that is everlasting, the other loses all at death: the one has rest, blessedness, holy fellowship in the future; the other is lonely, homeless, in torments. The nobility of heaven is one of character, and only the noble in heart can find a place there.

This is Christ's picture of the man who is sunk in worldly ease and self-gratification, leaving the great outside world to roll on in its woe, and sin, and pain, and never reaching forth a hand of healing pity and mercy towards it. Let every man who is exposed

to this temptation look upon this picture, until heart and brain are inspired with the enthusiasm of humanity, and he becomes one of the good Samaritans of the world.

THOMAS HAMMOND.  
WOODFORD.

### Luke xiv. 18.

(*The Second Sunday after Trinity.*)

"I PRAY THEE HAVE ME EXCUSED."

THE Religious Life is a Festival. This is the plain teaching of this and several similar parables. From this Feast souls seek to be excused. This is the strange teaching of our text. We notice—

I.—THOSE WHO REFUSE TO BECOME RELIGIOUS MEN REJECT THE HIGHEST BLESSEDNESS OF LIFE. They decline an invitation to a banquet,—a banquet not for the senses but for the soul. They exclude themselves, as these invited guests did, from (1) *Light*; (2) *Rest*; (3) *Fellowship*; (4) *Satisfaction*. It reads as an awful satire, but is simple truth, that men declining to become Christly and apologising for that, are excusing themselves for rejecting all the measureless blessings of life.

II.—Those who make this great refusal DO SO IN EXCUSES THAT ARE ALL VAIN AND EVIL. Not that the things with which they



have to do are in themselves wrong, but their attitude to them is wrong. They enter into wrong relationship to (1) *Labour and Property*. "The world is too much with them late and soon." (2) *Love and Joy*. In a solemn sense affectionate sinners prove that a man's foes are they of his own household.

EDITOR.

### 1 Peter v. 6—11.

(*The third Sunday after Trinity.*)

ANALYSING these remarkable verses, we find they indicate—

I.—THE TRUE SPIRIT FOR A CHRISTIAN MAN TO CHERISH IN LIFE'S TRIALS. Here is (a) *devout humility, and with it freedom from anxiety*. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God." What shall be said about the hand of God? It is (1) *great*,

(2) *gentle*; and so inspires both the humility and trust of which we speak. Because His hand is at work we can believe that "in due time," that is in the right time all will be well. "Casting all care," &c. There is no orphaned soul; His is our Father's hand. But (b) *Sober watchfulness and stern conflict*. There is (1) *sober-mindedness*; (2) *vigilance*; and this because of (1) the enemy; (2) the experience of our predecessors. Into the storm and battle all the brotherhood, even the Elder Brother, has gone.

II.—THE FINAL PURPOSE OF GOD WITH REGARD TO THOSE WHO CHERISH THIS SPIRIT. There is (a) *a destiny that is wonderful*; (b) *a trial that is transient*; (c) *a character that is complete*; and (d) *the ascription of praise that is most worthy*.

EDITOR.

"We cannot bring the heavenly powers to us; but if we will only choose our jobs in directions in which they travel, they will undertake them with the greatest pleasure. It is a peremptory rule with them that they never go out of their road. We are dapper little busy-bodies, and run this way and that super-serviceably, but they swerve never from their fore-ordained paths,—neither the sun, nor the moon, nor a bubble of air, nor a mote of dust."—R. W. EMERSON.

## Breviaries.

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### Paul at Corinth.

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“AFTER THESE THINGS PAUL DEPARTED FROM ATHENS, AND CAME TO CORINTH,” &c.—*Acts* xviii. 1—11.

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PAUL had left Athens and gone to Corinth. We know what Athens was and in what a paroxysm of pity and grief he had viewed it from Areopagus. We also know how he had sought to turn its light, gay people from dumb idols to serve the living God. To get some true conception of Corinth read the first of F. W. Robertson's Lectures on the Epistle to the Corinthians. There was enough to make a stout heart quail; and a man with less strong faith in God despair. I.—PAUL SET HIMSELF TO WORK UPON THOSE MOST LIKELY TO BE INFLUENCED BY HIS TEACHING. He spake and reasoned every Sabbath in the synagogue to and with those who had some sort of belief in the true and living God, and who were not utterly unacquainted with spiritual things. Probably thought that by this means he might the sooner influence others. II.—PAUL BEING REPULSED DOES NOT ABANDON THE WORK. It was not his nature. Before his conversion his whole energy was bent to accomplish whatsoever he took in hand. It is the same still. The Jews will not hear—then the Gentiles shall be tried. “If they persecute you,” &c. In Corinth there are room and people enough. III.—PAUL'S HEART IS GREATLY CHEERED IN HIS LABOURS. (*a*) By the conversion of Titus Justus, Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and many others. (*b*) By the sympathy of that gracious and devout couple, Aquila and Priscilla. (*c*) By the active aid of Silas and Timotheus, who had recently joined him. Cf. 2 Cor. i. 19—“Jesus Christ . . . was preached among you by us, by me, and Silvanus, and Timotheus.” *Note*.—Touches scattered through the Epistles which shew that St. Paul was no misanthrope, but was cheered and animated by companionship. (*d*) By the night vision. Not the first time he had been so favoured (cf. xvi. 9, 10). Here (1) distinct command to continue preaching. (2) Assurance of the Divine presence. (3) Promise of the Divine protection. (4) Revelation of the Divine interest in that city—wicked, corrupt, abandoned as it was. IV.—PAUL KEPT STEADILY AT THE APPOINTED WORK. “He sat there a year and six months teaching among them the Word of God.” 1 Cor. ii. 1—4 gives us the marrow

and soul of the Apostle's teaching. Result?—The Church of Corinth: one of the largest and noblest harvests ever given to ministerial toil. CONCLUSION:—(1) *God must surely have "much people" in this place.* (2) *God will use us to gather in the "people for His name."* Believe not only that He *can* but that He *WILL* (3) *God's Gospel which would do at Corinth will do anywhere.*

ST. CLEMENT, BRISTOL.

FAIRFAX GOODALL, B.A.

## The Rain and the Word.

"FOR AS THE RAIN COMETH DOWN, AND THE SNOW FROM HEAVEN, AND RETURNETH NOT THITHER, BUT WATERETH THE EARTH, AND MAKETH IT BRING FORTH AND BUD, THAT IT MAY GIVE SEED TO THE SOWER, AND BREAD TO THE EATER: SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHERE TO I SENT IT."—*Isaiah* lv. 10, 11.

THIRSTY land and famishing souls; the water and the Word that each needs; and the refreshing and satisfying effect of the right reception of the water by the earth and of the Word by the human soul, this is the recurring thought of this familiar chapter. Does not this thought give us the higher interpretation of the fertilising rains of this season of the year? We take "the Word" in its widest sense; the whole message of God in Christ the Word, to whom other messages, though words in themselves, are but component syllables. And thinking of the correspondences between the rain and Christ the Word, we discern that both are I.—SUPERHUMAN IN ORIGIN. Who can produce rain? "Hath the rain a father"? Who could create the Christ of the Gospels,—His doctrines, His activities, above all, His character? It is manifestly "from above." II.—IMPARTIAL IN DISTRIBUTION. The rain falls (a) whatever the varieties of soil—rock, sand, meadow. (b) whatever the character of the proprietors of the soil—"just and unjust." So the Gospel is full, free, unrestrained. "The light that lighteth every man," &c. III.—CERTAIN IN RESULTS. Note thoughtfully, (1) *the purpose* of the rain and the Word *is fulfilled in all cases.* (2) The fulfilment of the purpose, both of the rain and of the Word, contemplates *human agency*: sower, eater, &c.

EDITOR.

## Service and its Symbol.

“I AM IN THE MIDST OF YOU AS HE THAT SERVETH.”—*Luke* xxii. 27.

No doubt, as Bishop Lightfoot suggests, this sentence was uttered either during, or just before, or immediately after the feet-washing. The act emphasises the word; the word lights up the act. Here we have I.—SERVICE IN THE TIME OF CONSCIOUS GLORY. “Jesus knowing that He came forth from God and was going to God . . . took a towel.” So it should be in our time of glory, (a) of robust health, (b) of commercial or academic success. (c) of social joy, (d) of spiritual elevation. Then say, “I serve.” II.—SERVICE, THOUGH THE ATMOSPHERE IS TAINTED WITH SELFISHNESS. There was (a) the selfishness of greed and gain in Judas, (b) the selfishness of ambition in all. But it did not paralyse Christ’s spirit of service. So amidst envyings, rivalries, strifes, let us say, “I serve.” III.—SERVICE TO MEN OF INDIFFERENT CHARACTERS. To Thomas, Peter, probably Judas, Jesus stooped to wash their feet. We must serve the unlovely and unfaithful. IV.—SERVICE THAT IS PERFECT IN EVERY DETAIL—No haste—towel,—basin; kneeling. So let our service be thorough.

EDITOR.

## Gratitude and Devotion.

“THY LOVING-KINDNESS IS BETTER THAN LIFE, THEREFORE MY LIPS SHALL PRAISE THEE.”—*Psalms* lxiii. 3.

I.—THE FAVOUR RECOGNISED. “Thy loving-kindness.” (1) Its *source*. “Thy.” The fountain of *wisdom, love, and power*. (2) Its *quality*. “Loving-kindness.” Not kind acts merely, but the kindness of love. (3) Its *constancy*. (4) Its *comprehensiveness*. II.—THE ESTIMATE FORMED. It “is better than life.” The second death consists not in the destruction of being, but of well-being. Sin destroyed man’s eternal well-being, but the “loving-kindness” of God restores it. (1) It harmonises man with his surroundings. (2) It extracts the sting of death. (3) It sanctifies life’s sorrows. (4) It endears and sweetens life’s comforts. III.—THE RESOLUTION MADE. “My lips shall praise Thee.” (1) Piety is intensely *personal*. “My lips.” If “my lips” have no praise, my heart has no love. Internal life *must* find external expression. (2) Piety is *joyous* devotion. “Shall praise.” (3) Piety is personal, joyous devotion to a *personal God*.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

## Pulpit Handmaids.

### Von Zezschwitz on Homiletics.

THE completion of Zöckler's *Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaften*, just announced, calls for more than a passing notice on the part of the friends of theological science. It is a work of immense labour and research, and the different branches of theological learning are treated by men of leading rank in their several departments. Altogether the book may be taken to represent the teaching of the foremost men of the Lutheran Evangelical Church. The subject of *Homiletics* is entrusted to Prof. Gerhard von Zezschwitz, of Erlangen.\* He treats his subject under seven heads:—(1) Introductory, Name, Idea, and Task of Homiletics. (2) The History of Preaching in the Early Church. (3) History of Mediæval Preaching. (4) Revival of Preaching at the Reformation, and subsequent degeneracy. (5) History of Preaching in its Modern form. (6) The Theory of the Art: (*a*) Preaching as controlled by the word of God. (*b*) The formal determining of his discourse by the interests of the congregation.

Without attempting an outline of the argument of Von Zezschwitz, we shall content ourselves with giving a selection made here and there.

The name "Homiletics" commends itself above various other proposed names, as best corresponding to the idea of teaching in a Christian congregation on the part of those who "labour in the word." (The term itself dates only from the last quarter of the seventeenth century, but the *idea* exists from New Testament times.) 'Ομιλεῖν combines the ideas of meeting together, of friendly converse, and of interchange of words. Xenophon uses it to denote the intercourse between disciples and teacher. In the New Testament it is employed of the communion on the way to Emmaus (see also Acts xxiv. 26). The interchange of thought between Paul and the disciples at Troas is designated by this word (Acts xxii. 11; compare ver. 9). In a kindred sense the word ὁμιλία is employed by

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\* The whole work consists of three volumes, of two parts each. Parts 3 and 5 constitute Volume III. in this first edition. Part 5 contains *Homiletics* and *Liturgies*, etc. Part 3 contains *Ethics*, by Luthardt; Introduction to *Practical Theology*, by Von Zezschwitz; *Evangelistics*, *Catechetics*, and the first two pages of *Homiletics*. Part 5 is thus not quite complete in itself.



Menander, as cited by Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 33. The *ὁμιλεῖν* of 1 Cor. xiv. most closely corresponds to the idea and the ideal of Christian fellowship.

Schweitzer says of Schleiermacher as a preacher: "He would speak as a brother to brethren, whose Christian consciousness he had not to bring into existence, but only to unfold. He would appeal to this consciousness, exhibit it, purify, confirm it; but not seek to introduce it as something new." In this way the preacher's part in a worshipping assembly is most fitly indicated.

*Preaching as part of the worship.* As such it has a festal and festive character. Spiritual enjoyment has been designated by Palmer as the specific end of the life of worship. The preacher has to apportion the bread of life to the members of his congregation.

Of this preaching the most effectual is that which may be denominated the *psychological pastoral*. "The language of life which is here to be spoken must flow, without discolourment, immediately from the fountain head of all spiritual life, the Word of God. In other words, Christianity, for which the dogmatic system seeks to provide the best corresponding doctrinal expression—the Christianity which the preacher has to present—becomes objectivised in the living form of the 'facts' of life, or the Divine facts for the well being of mankind. This actuality, and not the form of *doctrine*, is the essential characteristic of all real Divine revelation in mankind, and just this is the most original and essential *Biblicity* in preaching. The word of Scripture is itself nothing else but one great testimony of facts." "In this way the only true means of reconciliation between the 'dogmatic' and the 'ethical' preaching is found. The positiveness of the character of revelation is preserved in the most *naïve* form, and the higher fountain for really ethical effects is opened up. We are concerned not merely with the attesting and recalling to mind of historic facts, but with such facts as have become the foundation of the Church life; *i.e.*, facts ever renewed within the hearts and experience of men." To transpose the objective facts of salvation into the experimental facts of the soul's inner life is manifestly the highest task of the Christian cultic discourse.

The sacred discourse falls under the general head of oratory. It bears, therefore, in early times the title *λόγος* and *sermo*, no less than that of *ὁμιλία*. The greatest teachers and orators of the ancient Church owe their finish in point of form to those schools of rhetoric inherited from classic antiquity. In the Middle Ages the eloquence of the pulpit flourished in proportion to the stirring and inspiring character of the times—most at the great epochs of history. Names like those of Basil, Chrysostom,

Augustine, Cæsarius of Arles, Fulco of Neuilly, Berchthold of Regensburg, and Luther, suffice to exemplify this truth.

The cultivation of the gift of oratory is advisable as a means to a higher end. Bossuet's *Funeral Orations* are employed as models to this end in France, where they are acquired by heart. Theremin's *Eloquence a Virtue*, in the translation of Prof. Shedd, is employed with like design in America. "As an angel," was the verdict of a competent judge on the delivery of Saurin. If language is the highest faculty for the manifestation of one's spirit, the spiritual discourse is that which specially constitutes the "preciousness" (Luther: *Köstliches Werk*) of the bishop's office, on account of which the Apostle represents it as so desirable (1 Tim. iii. 1; compare ver. 17).

The history of preaching in its three main periods, of the Early Church, the Middle Ages, and the Post-Reformation Era, occupies pp. 255—390. We can only *indicate* the line of thought without attempting to reproduce it within the space at our disposal.

The proclamation of the glad tidings by Christ was continued by the Apostles. Their preaching was a new "prophesying," in the power of the Pentecostal Spirit, for the inauguration of that work of preaching henceforth to be continued in the Christian Church. After an animated sketch of the preaching in the Apostolic age, our author proceeds to the history of preaching in the Early Church. Hippolytus, Origen, Thaumaturgus, Nazianzen, Ephraëm Syrus, Macarius the Elder, prepare the way for Basil and Chrysostom, in whom the Græco-Oriental eloquence reached its culminating point. The last of the Grecian models is seen in Theodoret (from A.D. 420, Bishop of Cyrus).

The culminating point of Western eloquence was first attained in Augustine, who greatly surpasses Ambrose. And yet Augustine is greater as a profound and thoughtful theologian and as a subtil dialectician, than as an orator. While he far excels Chrysostom in profundity, and even practically in point of moral earnestness, yet there cleaves to his homiletic presentation much more of the scholastic rhetorical form than in the case of Chrysostom. As an exegete he relapses into Origen's fondness for the play of allegory. He speaks too much the abstract language of dogmatics, and is wanting as regards the unity of theme and clearness of division. (A fine description of the powerful effect of his sermons, notwithstanding these defects, is given at p. 263.)

His fourth book, *De Doctrina Christiana*, added three years before his death, may be pronounced the earliest work on Homiletics.

After witnessing the labours of the early popular preachers, from Columban onwards, we see a very important impulse given to the preaching in the vernacular by the call to the Crusades. At the time of the second Crusade, Bernard of Clairvaux, preached to the Germans, his words being rendered by an interpreter. Fulco de Neuilly arose at the close of the twelfth century, and was spoken of far and wide as a second Paul. Under the impulse given by him, Master Walther, of London, and Master Stephen, of Langton (afterwards Archbishop), preached to their countrymen in the Norman-French of that day. The greatest effect of all was produced by the labours of Berchthold, of Regensburg (born A.D. 1221). From 1250 we see him arising as a herald of repentance, traversing S. W. Germany and even Switzerland, and after 1262 Bohemia and Hungary. "Der gut selig Landprediger," as he was called, closed his life of blessing at Regensburg, on the 13th Dec., 1272. The effects of his ministry were felt until the time of the Reformation, to which he contributed in his measure. Much that is of interest is communicated with regard to Wyclif and the immediate precursors of the Reformation, among whom were Gerhard Groote, who died in the same year as Wyclif, and John Veghe (1504).

The history of the preaching of the Reformation and post-Reformation period naturally opens with a notice of Luther, who is pronounced "a master, specially in the handling of the historic texts of the Gospels; endowed with no less power of vivid distinctness in description than of practical skill in application." Of the sketches given of eminent preachers of the Lutheran Church, those of Scriver, Arndt, Herberger, Spener, Mosheim, Franke, Bengel, Fresenius, Löscher, Rambach, Herder, Schleiermacher, and Theremin, are amongst the most interesting. Among the preachers of the Reformed Church the portraiture of Zwingli, Bullinger, Farel, Hyperius, Saurin, Monod, and Vinet, is very effectively drawn. The strongly marked individualism of Menkin and Claus Harms is likewise brought into bold relief. For us the notices of Gossner, Jänicke, and L. Hofacker are more attractive, because we are in greater sympathy with the men and their work. The great preachers of the Gallican Church receive their full meed of justice, as do Richard Baxter and some others of the English preachers. The history of our Puritanic literature of the pulpit still remains for continental historians, to a great extent, a *tabula rasa*.

Yet the work of Von Zezschwitz is particularly abundant in the literature of each subject. The list of works on the history of preaching is singularly full. The list having reference to the preaching since the Reformation

will be found p. 306. The most recent works on Homiletics are enumerated pp. 390, 391. Some of the earlier ones are indicated pp. 325—327, and among these [posthumous] the work of William Perkins (Basle, 1602). Among the curiosities of literature may be mentioned a volume of Ochins's Discourses, published at "Ippeswich," 1548, to which attention is drawn, p. 331.

We must hasten just to glance at the *theory of preaching*, which is amply developed in the volume before us. The form of the sermon is determined, in the first place (substantially), from the word of God, and, in the second place (formally), by the interests of the congregation.

Under the former head (pp. 391—420) the principles laid down by our author for the choice and handling of the text, and the construction of the discourse are so excellent that we are tempted to present them at considerable length. The same thing, too, must be said of the golden maxims of Hyperius (*De Theologo*, 2 vols., Basle, 1570, 1571), which are so frequently commended in this volume.\* We must content ourselves with a single extract from this part of the work. "No really popular homiletic treatment," he says, "can dispense with the analogy of natural life and its moral laws—as psychological presuppositions always form the most apt parallels for the Christian experience. But the norm of appreciation, and the higher ideal for the life of regeneration and transformation of the natural, always flows for the Christian homilete, in original fulness and purity, from Holy Scripture and its *loci communes*, 'concerning'—as Hyperius formulates it—'the whole doctrine of devotion, the offices of faith, love, and hope'—*De omni doctrina pietatis, de fidei, caritatis, et spei officiis*."

*The Preacher and the Congregation* is the subject of the last division. We select only two passages as indicating the mode of treatment. The first is on the appeal to the *conscience*. "The sacred discourse has to do with moral motives of the highest order, and always appeals to the most intensely receptive side of man—the conscience. In the language of Vinet, 'that which the preaching adduces still so closely answers to the capacity of the conscience, even enfeebled as this is by sin, that the mutual adaptedness of the two marks out with equal clearness their original destination for each other, as in antiquity the fitting of the two halves of the *tessera* served to make good the mutual claim to the rights of hospitality.' The preacher, under the operation of the Spirit of God, speaks

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\* The fourth book, *De Theologo*, deals more particularly with the work of the preacher.

with irresistible power to the conscience." On this account the employment of devices for attracting the attention of the audience, in place of relying upon the proclamation of the truth to the conscience, is to be condemned in accordance with the great principle, "He that *gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.*"

"The delusion that the Word of God requires such adventitious aids is the 'strange fire' upon the altar of the Lord, which may easily dazzle and raise the unhallowed ardour of human enthusiasm, but will never enkindle in the souls of men the pure and sacred fire of heartfelt devotion, in penitence and faith and self-denying love. Of what use is the office of the preacher in the world if it fails to attain this its true end? But to labour and task all one's powers for this object will render eloquent even men of slow tongue and mediocre gifts of nature."

We close with some apt remarks on the gift of *persuasion* (p. 422).

"The *πειθεῖν*, this technical expression of the ancient rhetoric, was less 'a talking over' than a 'convincing,' and so 'persuading,' corresponding to the *πιθανόν* of the demonstration. The language of the New Testament, particularly that after the type of Paul, makes an abundant and choice use of the old classical term (Gal. i. 10; 2 Cor. v. 11; Acts xxvi. 28, sqq.; compare xviii. 4; xix. 8, 26; xxvi. 23). The spirit of sacred love for souls imparts even to the 'persuading' a higher sense, even as such higher sense was not wanting in common usage whenever rhetoric was employed for inspiring to noble ends. . . . The preacher measures his success in speaking well by the standard of Paul (Gal. i. 10), which a Chrysostom so earnestly emphasises in the words—"that the sermon *be pleasing to God.*" In this aim is found the highest antidote to that spiritual indolence which makes preachers seek to hide their lack of zeal and holy enthusiasm under a contempt for the arts of rhetoric."

For the frequent remarks on appealing to the reason, as the higher *νοεῖν*, in order to lead to a *μετανοεῖν* (p. 432), and those on "delivery," &c. (p. 442), we must refer the reader who is familiar with German to the volume itself, which he will hardly open at any page without meeting with something of value to him.

Of the whole work, suffice it to say that, after the publication of the General Index in the course of the present summer, it will constitute a complete manual for all who are engaged in pastoral labour, leaving as such little or nothing to be desired.

MAURICE J. EVANS, B.A.



THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE ARTIST, THE AUTHOR,  
AND THE PREACHER.

*(Archdeacon Farrar at the Royal Academy.)*

THE artist and the man of letters, though they differ in their gifts and in their methods, are essentially united in feeling and in purpose. They appeal to the same emotions to enforce the same lesson, they illustrate the same truths, they labour for the same objects. The common aim of both is the emancipation and the free development of our spiritual nature. The humblest artist as he reads the great works written by men of genius in all ages—the humblest man of letters as, year after year, he has the delight of gazing on these splendidly illuminated walls—may claim that he belongs to one and the same great brotherhood—the brotherhood of those who have consistently laboured to cheer, to bless, and to elevate mankind. Turner called himself “the author” not “the artist” of his pictures; and, indeed, writing and painting are but different forms of that one eternal language of which not even Babel could confound the significance. There is hardly a single work in this exhibition which does not illustrate the close connection between literature and art. Landscape painting has always been a chief glory of our English school, and what are the great poets of all ages but landscape painters, and what are the best landscape painters but poets? Alike they reproduce for us the aspects of nature, translated into human thoughts, and tinged with human emotion, when flowers show us the bees swarming out of the hollow rock, and hanging in grape-like clusters on the blossoms of spring; when Æschylus flashes upon us the unnumbered laughter of the sea waves; when Virgil in a single line paints for us the silvery Galaesus, flowing now under dark boughs, and now through golden fields; when Dante bids us gaze on a sky which is of the sweet colour of the Eastern sapphire; when Wordsworth points us to the daffodils tossing in the winds of March beside the dancing waves of the lake; when Tennyson shows us the “gummy chesnut buds that glisten in the April blue;” when, even in prose, Mr. Ruskin produces scenes and sunsets as gorgeous as those of his own Turner—what are they but landscape painters? Again, how many memorable scenes of history are inseparable in our minds, alike and almost equally, from the descriptions of the writer or the conceptions of the artist? Shall we ever think of the execution of Mary Queen of Scots without recalling Mr. Froude’s description of her as she stood a blood-red figure on the the black-robed scaffold?

Shall we ever think of Monmouth pleading for his life with James II. without remembering the picture which hung last year upon these walls? Is there no affinity between the novelist and our many painters of ordinary scenes, with their kindred endeavour to shed light and beauty on the hopes and fears, the duties and sorrows of human life? Nay, if even the preacher and the divine may claim any part in the domain of letters, they too look to the artist for the aid and inspiration which in their turn they lend to him. Which of us can ever read the words, "These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of My friends," or "Behold I stand at the door and knock," without being helped to realise their meaning in the pathetic allegories of Mr. Millais and Mr. Holman Hunt? And the verse, "Oh had I the wings of a dove," is, in my own mind, henceforth inseparably associated not only with the melody of Mendelssohn, in which we seem to see the dove hovering, as it were, in a cloud of golden music, but also with the picture I saw many years ago of a weary king sitting on his palace roof, his hair sable-silvered, and his crown laid humbly on the parapet beside him, whose eyes wistfully follow the flight of a flock of doves towards the twilight sky. I am sure that I echo the sentiment of every painter and of every author when I say we are brothers in the effort to make the happy happier, and the sad less miserable; and (in poet's words) "To teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think, to feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous."

High is our calling, friends! Creative Art,  
(Whether the instruments of words she use,  
Or pencil, pregnant with ethereal hues),  
Demands the service of a mind and heart,  
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part  
Heroically fashioned—to infuse  
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,  
While the whole world seems adverse to desert.  
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard.



## Selected Seedlings—May Meetings, 1884.

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THE PROPHET'S CREED.—“Other men's creeds are often made; *the prophet's creed* is always grown. And like all things of hard, strong fibre, its growth is slow. Credulity or ignorance do not facilitate the acquisition of his beliefs. Others may close their eyes to discordant facts, and their ears to unwelcome voices; but love is the prophet's life, and love listens to every voice of man, ignores no gainsaying, flees from no gloom of doubt, shuts not its ears to the cries of misery, of despair, of presumptuous hatred of God and man.”—*Richard Glover.*

MODERN SCEPTICISM.—“*The denial of our time* is not the old, heartless, superficial denial of by-gone times. It is a denial, but one of fear, with wonder in its heart, a denial that questions—not the denial of the Pharisees of olden times that said, “You are a devil,”—not the denial of the Sadducees that mocked at Him, and sneered at Him, and sought to catch Him in His talk. It is far more like that doubting, hesitating inquiry of Nicodemus, who could not acknowledge Him to be the Son of God.”—*Prof. Elmslie.*

SUCCOUR AND SYMPATHY.—“*Succour* is the stream of which *sympathy* is the fountain. Succour is the flower of which sympathy is the root. Succour is the life-giving ray of which sympathy is the radiant sun. If the stream does not flow, you may be sure that the fountain is dry. If the flower withers, the root is dead. And if the Christian Church does not exhibit effective succour, the failure is due to defective sympathy.”—*Hugh Price-Hughes.*

CHRISTIAN ALLIANCES.—“I rejoice in these *Christian alliances*. Upon the surface there are little sectarian clefts that seem to divide us, but down in the depths the rock-strata unite again: we are one in the personal Saviour. These common platforms do more than all our loud-sounding homilies on Christian charity to unite Christendom and silence the scoffer; for one noble action is worth a Niagara of empty sound.”—*Ossian Davies.*

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE SCRIPTURES.—“As God is present in the universe the *Holy Spirit is present in Scripture*. God so manifests Himself in the universe that all who seriously contemplate it find it difficult to be atheists; the Holy Spirit so testifies of Christ in Scripture, that all who seriously study it must struggle hard not to be Christians. The Bible is a wonderful creation of the Holy Spirit.”—*Prof. Flint.*

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL.—“What physical science was to Darwin, what metaphysics was to Kant, what material progress was to Mill, that the kingdom of God was to the Christian. That was the ideal before the Christian's eyes, and the Christian's motive of action was to realise that ideal.”—*R. P. Horton.*

BRISTOL CONGREGATIONAL INSTITUTE.

T. B. KNIGHT.

THEFTS FROM *THE HOMILIST*.

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*To the Editor of "The Homilist."*

SIR,—I have just seen a long letter from the Rev. Dr. Harper, of Toronto, Ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference.\* There is so much in that letter referring to *The Homilist* that one or two Extracts may interest your numerous readers.

Of the late Editor he says,—“If Dr. Thomas should come, the Christian homes and pulpits in Canada will all be open to him in royal Republic style. I will try to hope for the event in the near future. I say it thoughtfully—I would cheerfully cross the ocean for one day of his company. If I go again to the grand old land I must see Bristol, and make the personal acquaintance of the present Editor. He is doing well in the hazardous work undertaken of carrying on a periodical which never had an equal and will never have a superior while the world lasts. There will be no falling off in the support extended to it from Canada.”

I enclose a paper which will explain itself. It supplies another melancholy proof of the weakness and dishonesty of some *pious* (?) man. “What a poor, watery, trashy thing is that *Homiletic Library*. I tried to read it but have not been able.” The readers might well reply in the language of the rebellious Israelites of old—“Our soul loathes this light bread.” How many attempts have been made to rival *The Homilist* or to supersede it! and, although failure after failure ensues, the self-produced deception continues, and the net is not broken. In the first volume of *The Homiletic Library*, published by James Nisbet and Co., 1882, and Edited by Rev. Canon Spence, M.A., and Rev. Joseph Exell, M.A., under the list of contributions to the volume will be found the following statement:—“The Editors say that they think it right to state that the *Sermon Outlines contained in this volume are original, and have not appeared in print before.*” Now, after this, see an “Outline” on the next

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\* For a sketch of the life and a portrait of this highly-gifted and influential man, see “Canadian Methodist Magazine,” Feb., 1881, in which it is stated that “Dr. Harper has pursued an extensive course of languages and literature in the provincial University. In that Institution his name appears as prizeman, first in the first-class in Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, all through that time. In modern languages he took German, Spanish, and Italian, carrying off in the latter the prize poem from all competitors.”

page, found on page 208 in this same volume, and compare it with one in *The Homilist*, Volume viii. from the commencement, for the year 1859 :—

*THE HOMILIST.*

*THE HOMILETIC LIBRARY.*

**Relation of Christ to the Human Soul.**

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.”—REV. iii. 20.*

*“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.” (Rev. iii. 20.)*

ANALYSIS OF HOMILY THE THREE HUNDRED  
AND TWENTY-NINTH.

IN these words we have three things :—  
Christ’s attitude towards the soul,—  
His action upon it,—and His aim in  
reference to it.

I.—HIS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE SOUL. “I stand at the door.” He is constantly in contact with the soul. He does not come occasionally and then depart; He *stands*. This shows—First: *His deep concern*. In the eye of Christ the soul is no trifling object: He knows its *capabilities, relations, power, influence, interminable history*. This shows—Secondly: *His infinite condescension*. Frail man. Who stands at the door? The Creator of the Universe, etc. This shows—Thirdly: *His wonderful patience*. Day after day, year after year He *stands* there, “Waiting to be gracious.”

II.—HIS ACTION UPON THE SOUL. He does not stand there as a statue doing nothing. He *knocks*: He *knocks* at the door of intellect with His philosophic truths; at the door of conscience, with His ethical principles;

*I.—Christ’s ATTITUDE towards the Soul—*

1. *Manifests great interest in the soul*. Jesus knows its value, its power, &c.

2. *Manifests the greatness of His condescending love*. Who is He that thus stands?

3. *Manifests His most wonderful patience*. How long has He been thus standing?

*II.—Christ’s ACTION on the soul.*  
“I stand, and knock.” He appeals.



at the door of *love*, with His transcendent charms ; at the door of *hope*, with His heavenly glories ; at the door of *fear*, with the terrors of His law. He knocks by providence and by preaching, by men and events, by books and Bibles. This is His action. The fact that He thus stands and knocks and the door does not open, shows three things :—First : *The moral power of the sinner*. The soul has the power to shut out Christ. It can bolt itself against its Creator. This it does by *directing* its thoughts to other subjects, by *deadening* its convictions, by *procrastinations*. This shows—Secondly : *The consummate folly of the sinner*. Who is shut out ? Not a foe or thief ; but a friend, a physician, a deliverer. This shows Thirdly : *The awful guiltiness of the sinner*. It shuts out its proprietor, its rightful Lord.

III.—HIS AIM IN REFERENCE TO THE SOUL. It is not to destroy it, but to come into it and identify Himself with all its feelings, aspirations, and interests. “I will come unto him and will sup with him and he with Me.” This is figurative language, but easily understood. It means—First : *Inhabitation*. “I will come unto him.” We are perpetually letting people into our hearts. How pleased we are if some illustrious personage will enter our humble homes, and sit down with us, etc. It means—Secondly : *Identification*. “Sup with him and he with Me.” I will be at home with him, be one with him. A conventionally great man deems it a condescension to enter the house of an

1. *To the understanding.*

2. *To the emotions.*

3. *To the will.*

This is the commonly received division of man’s mental nature. Conscience is involved in each and all of these, and assumes the claims, spiritually regarded, of a separate faculty. Christ knocks.

III.—Christ’s AIM with reference to the soul.

1. *He desires us to open the door.*

2. *He desires to confer benefits on us.*

(1) His companionship.

(2) His gifts—pardon, peace, holiness, heaven.

inferior; he never thinks of *identifying* himself with the humble inmate. Christ does this with the soul that lets Him in. He makes its cares His own. Open the door, then, sinner; let in the genial ray and the salubrious breeze upon thy benighted and withered heart. Open the door, let in the Physician, and He will heal thee of all thy maladies; open the door, let in the Emancipator, He will break all thy bonds and set thee free; open the door, let in the King to thy wretched cell, thou criminal—He has pardon to bestow. Open the door. Reason, conscience, all true voices in all worlds say, “Open the door.”

This comparison shows that the perpetrator of this egregious plagiarism has mutilated, and emasculated his theft. He has taken from the stolen property its blooming freshness, its vital consistency, and philosophic force. Certain members of other professions may, no doubt, be capable of chicanery, but it would be hard to find anything in legal or medical literature to compare for a moment with this. Indeed, if a writer belonging to either of those fraternities should be found guilty of such dishonesty, he would cease to be considered worthy of recognition.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

A PHYSICIAN.



## Reviews.

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HOMILISTIC LIBRARY. "PSALMS II." By Rev. DAVID THOMAS, D.D.  
London: R. D. Dickenson, Farringdon Street. (pp. 478.)

[*Extracted from a criticism which appeared in "The Oldham Chronicle,"  
April 19th, 1884.*]

"We need scarcely say that this volume is uniform with volume one. It is the same in size, printed like it on the best paper and in the best style, is bound in a superior manner, and its appearance is at once pleasing and imposing. Mr. Dickenson gets up all his better theological works in first-class style, but as yet he has done nothing superior, and nothing even so good as the volume before us. Dr. Thomas's method of exposition is by this time well known to all who take any real interest in theological literature. He first of all gives us the text itself, then follows the historical occasion, then exegetical notes, new and selected, notes which, though brief, will compare favourably with anything England produces. Then follow homilies of great beauty and suggestiveness on the several parts of the paragraph expounded. Dr. Thomas has ransacked the whole literature of his subject, and so in one aspect his work might be regarded as an anthology on the Psalms. In another aspect it is the only homilectical exposition of the Psalms extant, for the other works in the same sphere are simply not worth mentioning when compared to this one. A mere glance of the marvellous analysis of all the Psalms expounded which form the table of contents of this volume is enough to show that the Doctor is unique in his position as a "Homilist." He has astounding powers of analysis, the ready and full sympathy with his authors, a most keen, spiritual instinct, and a remarkable genius for seizing hold of the principles which underlie all that is local, temporary, personal. It is this which gives a point, a freshness, a power to all that the Doctor writes. We move not among Hebrew heroes and Hebrew saints and sinners merely, but among men and women in the England of to-day. We see our own friends and our own foes, our own trials, temptations, and triumphs. The Doctor's crucial question is, "What does this book say to the men and women of our own country and age?" and the book is permitted to say it in language which is direct, personal, forceful, faithful, and impressive. We feel, and cannot but feel, that we are in the presence of a great teacher, who not only demands, but who commands attention, and even admiration. One of the most noticeable features in the volume are the "Sermonic Slippings," which consist of outlines of discourses, brief, symmetrical, and

suggestive. These alone are worth far more than the whole volume costs. This is a great work, and is worthy of the high reputation of its gifted author."

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LECTURES ON THE BEAUTIFUL AND SUBLIME IN NATURE AND IN MORALS.

By Rev. GEORGE MATHER. Sixth Thousand. London : Wesleyan Conference Office.

Mr. Mather is a man of rare refinement, to whom the task he set before himself in this book would be alike congenial and easy. His modesty equals his ability, for how different from the high sounding paragraphs in which many authors indulge is the following sentence from his preface :— "I am indebted to many authors, especially to Burke, Alison, McCosh, and Ruskin, but have endeavoured to give expression to thoughts which have been floating in my own mind for years, and which have (almost unconsciously) ministered to my pleasure." The opening words of the first chapter of the book indicate what may be expected throughout, and the high expectation is never disappointed. "Natural beauty is co-eval with creation : moral beauty is co-existent with the Creator." Popularly but always discriminatingly and thoughtfully does Mr. Mather proceed to deal with the great thesis he thus opens, unfolding it in successive chapters on "The Power of Association," "Elements of Beauty," "Colours," "Sound or Melody," &c. We do not wonder that so far away from natural beauty as lies Birmingham and other midland congregations, his hearers must have rejoiced in a ministry that brought them so much to refine and elevate them, or that now in one of the chief Cornish circuits in which he is ministering, the people who are surrounded by so much that is both "beautiful and sublime" in nature, are fascinated and inspired by a man whose whole tone and structure are in completest harmony with such surroundings, and with their deepest intellectual and spiritual analogues.

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A BIBLE DICTIONARY. By Rev. JAMES AUSTIN BASTOW. London : Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

This Dictionary comprehends a digest of the History and Antiquities of the Hebrews and neighbouring nations : the Natural History, Geography, and Literature of the Sacred Writings, with reference to the latest researches. As this is the fourth edition of this work, it must be pretty well known and appreciated. Since the publication of the third edition

Biblical research in various departments has made considerable advancement. The author says, "Monumental treasures, entombed for ages, have been exhumed, hieroglyphic and cuneiform inscriptions have surrendered to advancing science the story of the past—and numerous Journals of Oriental Travels and Exploration have appeared—the whole contributing, in the new and unexpected facts enunciated, an array of evidence at once overwhelming in magnitude and variety in verification and illustration of the Scriptures of Truth." This edition avails itself of all the new light, whilst, at the same time, many of the articles of the former issues have been carefully revised. Those who are fortunate enough to possess larger Biblical Dictionaries than this, such as Smith's, Kitto's, Fairbairn's, may not require such a work as this, but others not so favoured will find in this a great treasure. Though comparatively small, it is comprehensive and correct in its information : and its cheapness puts it within the reach of all those students whose purse is small.

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OUR MODERN PHILOSOPHERS, Darwin, Bain, Spencer ; or the Descent of Man, Mind, and Body. A Rhyme, with Reasons, Essays, Notes, and Quotations. By "PSYCHOSIS." London : T. Fisher Unwin, 26, Paternoster Square.

The author of this work, which is, alas ! a posthumous volume, was a man well qualified to deal with its recondite and difficult themes. For he united an unusually clear and searching intellect with an equally broad and genial heart. The title of the book gives a very fair idea of its scope, while the candid and careful preface indicates the character of the book, as an intelligent man's expressive face indicates the character of the man. There is nothing narrow in the spirit in which our author deals with the controversies he has in hand. Indeed it is clear that from beginning to end of his work he is in accord with the words of Dr. Pusey, which he approvingly quotes, "It is unscience not science that is adverse to faith." The bright, varied, and well filled pages of this book are not only pleasant and instructive reading, but well fitted for the purpose to which we hear a leading London Presbyterian minister intends devoting them, namely, that of a handbook for his Young Men's Class. Probably many will do likewise who have groups of earnest and intelligent but doubting young people about them. And who in these days has not ?



ECHOES FROM THE WELSH HILLS; or Reminiscences of the Preachers and People of Wales. By Rev. DAVID DAVIES, Weston-super-Mare (author of "The New Name and other Sermons"). Illustrated by T. H. Thomas, R.C.A. Second Edition. London: Alexander and Shepherd.

Those of our readers who remember our words of cordial greeting when, a few months ago, the first edition of this book appeared, will not wonder at our satisfaction that it has so soon entered a second edition. It ought to run through many editions if travellers and tourists to Wales this season only get it put in their way. It would be a charm if found in piles on every Welsh railway book-stall; for whether the reader be on the look out for vivid descriptions of the scenery of wild Wales, or be alive to humour and pathos, or be earnest in his quest of the secret of the deepest and best life of the Cambrian people, he will be delighted and satisfied here. We congratulate the author on the great success already realised and certainly yet in store for a work into which he has thrown so much enthusiasm, labour, and genius.

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ATTEMPTS AT TRUTH. By ST. GEORGE STOCK. London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill.

Most of these Essays have appeared in various periodicals, such as the "Wesminster Review," "Theological Review." The subjects discussed are—"The Two Schools of Thought—Why must I do what is Right?—What is Right?—Hume on Miracles—The Mediumship of the Emperor Vespasian—Positive View of Spiritualism and the Philosophy of Force—Value of à Priori Reasoning in Theology—Theism, a New Religion—The Bearings of Spiritualism—A Test from the Delphic Oracle—Materialism and Modern Spiritualism—What is Reality?—Berkeley and Positivism—Illusion and Delusion—Where is Heaven?" Those who are fond of moving in metaphysical regions and of perusing reasonings on abstruse subjects will find in this book much to charm them. The author is evidently a man of great intellectual force, profound thought, extensive reading, earnest purpose, and rare literary ability.





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